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# TOWARDS CHRISTIAN *DEMOCRACY*

BY  
**STAFFORD CRIPPS**



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*TOWARDS CHRISTIAN  
DEMOCRACY*

## CHAPTER I

### *The Task of the Church*

THERE IS A POWER existing on Earth that is far greater than any material power, that of the spirit, without which we can never succeed in utterly transforming not only our lives, but also the whole of our society.

That power of the spirit we call God. It is because I believe that Christ has shown us a way of living, here on earth, which could overcome our tragic difficulties and confusions, that I am urgently and deeply concerned as to the part our churches should and can play in the life of our nation and of the world. For, after all, it is the Church that is supposed to interpret the spirit of God and Christ.

Yet the claims to divine power and guidance put forward by the Church have not been substantiated by any of its recent acts, or by the influence exerted by it on world progress during the last three or four decades. This does not prove God to be a failure: it just shows that the Church has forgotten to play its role as interpreter of God's Will.

There have been, and still are to-day, two widely differing conceptions of the functions of the Church; these are not, perhaps, mutually exclusive, yet they offer the most opposite approaches to the problems of our civilisation. The first regards the Church as the channel by which we can individually attain personal salvation in

a life to be lived hereafter. The second sees the Church as the active protagonist of the Kingdom of Heaven, or the rule of God, here on earth, as the pioneer of social salvation, more concerned with creating the greatest sum of human good and happiness here and now, than with encouraging individual merit as a means to personal salvation hereafter.

The former of these two views tends to divorce the individual from his social responsibilities, in favour of a life of contemplation and prayer in preparation for the other world. The latter makes our daily actions, and not our words or thoughts, the vital means of interpreting the Christian ethic in our human society.

The growing appreciation and importance attached to this second approach to religion, the growth of the social conscience of the churches, has been one of the most significant phenomena in the development of religious feeling in our time.

It is this approach which gives religion its appeal to a great many of its keenest followers, especially amongst the younger generation. It is by emphasis upon this approach that the Church can ever revivify and reinforce the power of Christianity.

Old forms and phrases, associated with a past era of civilisation, and concentrating largely upon the "personal salvation" aspect of Christianity, have ceased to attract, despite their beauty and the traditions which surround them. They appear to lack relevance to those many practical problems of life which the people are most anxious to solve.

There is a sharp contrast between the preaching and

the practice of our social obligations, so that the preaching is in danger of encouraging a form of religious escapism.

We find, therefore, two worlds presented to us. The ideal, linked with the heavenly life after death, at the standards of which people now aim hopelessly and without any belief in their actual achievement, and the practical earthly life, regarded as necessarily imperfect and sinful.

One is God's life, the other man's life.

This dual conception creates a wholly false outlook. The truth is, that we are living God's life here and now. Whether good or bad, it is the life ordained by Him; it is His creation, and, through it, His purpose is constantly being served.

The rule of God is destined to come here on earth; His purpose will be worked out, for Christ has given us a vision of what the Kingdom on earth means. It is obvious that if the Church fails to make itself the instrument of that purpose, He will find another agent, for His will be done.

It is the two-worldly conception of religion which discourages the daily practice of our faith in the social and economic spheres of our lives.

It creates the concept of a "Sunday religion" practised on one day a week—set apart so that we may keep touch with the "other" unseen world—and a normal, human, every-day life, lived for the other six days, in which religion is largely irrelevant, except in so far as we try not to jeopardise our future other-worldly chances by committing personal sins.

It is, in my belief, fundamental to the continuing life and influence of the Church, that all Christians must insist on the Church instantly undertaking its task of social salvation, as the means of perfecting the rule of God on earth.

I could never believe that God created this world to be nothing but "a vale of suffering and tears" in preparation for joys in a life to come. It is His purpose, and so Christ has taught and lived, that we should work out our own salvation in this world of His creation and so accomplish our, and His, happiness.

This great adventure, in which the present war is but a single phase, should inspire us in the active pursuit of our Christian aims throughout our lives.

If we accept this aim of social salvation, there is the question as to how we are to carry our purpose into effect.

It is not the function of the Church, as an organised body, to enter the lists of the political parties. To do so, would be to confuse issues and to jeopardise the power of religion.

It is for the Church to provide the moral force and the driving power for social and economic development. The technical details of government and of legislation are for the politicians. But this is not to imply that politicians should be materialists. We require courageous Christians in our political life more than ever to-day. For, since this moral driving power is essentially designed to influence political decisions, its creation and its growth must impinge directly upon political thought and action.

Christian principles must be made so to permeate public opinion, that no Government can act against them, and those principles must be related to the social and economic problems of the moment. They must not be mere vague and idealistic platitudes unrelated to the actual structure of our society, or to the burning problems that vex our people.

It is the duty of the Church to interpret the Christian ethic in its relationship to the present-day facts of life, though these are often hard and unpleasant facts arising from our past neglect.

The strength of the moral leadership of the Church will depend upon the courage and the firmness with which this interpretation is given, and upon which it is insisted.

Courage and fearlessness of consequences are taught as outstanding Christian virtues, and in this moral leadership they must reach their highest level. Leadership does not consist in seeking to interpret and then to follow the wishes of the majority, but rather in the attempt to lead and direct popular thought along the channels of truly Christian action.

Indeed, leadership and popularity often appear to be almost opposites, as can be seen in the life of Christ, and in those of the early Christians. Yet, in the long run, moral leadership will justify itself with the people, not because it plays down to their momentary desires or emotions, but because it ultimately wins the support of all that is best in human nature.

Now, the application of Christian ethics to present-day circumstances has two main branches. The first,

which might be termed the negative, is in the condemnation of existing social and economic conditions not in accordance with Christian principles, the legacy of the past; the second, or positive branch, our own legacy to the future, being the accomplishment of social and economic ways of life consonant with our principles, actually our present Christian objectives for society.

This is not to press for an ideal other-worldly society, but for our society as it actually exists. We are not primarily concerned with individual preparation, in a hopeless world of evil, for an ideal world to come hereafter. We are concerned with the creation, out of the present drab unhappiness, of a new and joyous life for the people in "our green and pleasant land."

We must now directly occupy ourselves with our social life, such as we live it, good, bad or indifferent. "By their fruits shall ye know them" does not mean "by their hopes or imaginings of something better or different hereafter," but signifies "by what you see them actually do."

It is for the production of those fruits that we are responsible, and if we fail even to try to produce them, we confess to futility and to a supreme lack of faith; they do not consist of fine phrases or paeans of praise, but must be seen as solid actions. We know that some may appear as the most mundane kind of actions, like putting a piece of paper into a ballot box, or attending a meeting, yet others are more profound and far-reaching, such as setting ourselves a general standard for our own way of life. Still, the life of nations, and ultimately of the

world, is often built up of these actions, even if small and almost insignificant in themselves.

Undoubtedly, members of the Church must pledge themselves to act in support of those Christian objectives which are decided upon as the most urgent. But in order to guide such a decision, the Church must feel itself untrammelled by any material interest, so that it can freely decide upon the basis of its moral judgment alone. "Go—sell all thou hast and give to the poor" was an injunction given to enable the rich young man to exercise unbiased his moral judgment.

The Church has suffered, and suffers to-day, because of its consciousness that the bold teaching of Christian principles, if applied to our present society, will create a demand for far-reaching social and economic changes which may undermine its own financial and organisational stability. This consciousness is correct in its conclusions; yet it has no relevance whatever to the duty of the Church in putting forward the steps necessary for our social salvation. It cannot alter the objectives for which every Christian must work.

But what precisely is to be implied from the application of Christian principles to our national life to-day? We can ignore the negative aspect of the answer, for all are only too familiar with the repeated condemnations of much that is inadequate and unjust in our social and economic life. What is all-important is the positive, the creative side, that is associated with the present and the future, rather than with the past.

First, we, as Christians, necessarily reject completely and absolutely the Nazi materialist conception of society,

which is the right to dictate by brutality, turning the human individual, made in the image of God, into nothing more than one of millions of cogs in the machine of material efficiency, and the unlimited persecution and enslavement of all by a self-chosen class or race.

As a positive alternative, we insist upon the dignity of human life and the right of all persons—whatever their class, creed or colour—to contribute equally to the orderly development of their and our civilisation. This must follow from the basic Christian teaching of the brotherhood of all peoples.

This does not mean that we do not realise to the full how hard is the task of defeating the evil and establishing the good. We know this to be a task that will not be over when we have destroyed Nazism and its cruel power. We shall still encounter many other evil forces, enemies to our Christian objectives.

Indeed, the call for Christian self-sacrifice may well be greater and will certainly be no less when this war ends than it is to-day. We shall then have to devote ourselves to the establishment of social justice as strenuously and as wholeheartedly as we now strive to win the war. There must be no let-up, until we have won the peace, and it is inevitable that the struggle for social justice will be a long and arduous one.

Second on our positive list of Christian advocacy, we declare for a democratic way of life, because only in that can we give value to Christian brotherhood in our national life. The very idea of dictatorship is wholly contrary to that equality which brotherhood implies; nor can we acknowledge any human being as supreme or

as fit to control and order the destinies of others, whether in the political, social or economic spheres of our life.

Our form of democracy, whatever the technical experts make of it, must enshrine a real equality of opportunity and of effort throughout every field of human activity. We must persist in this demand until we are satisfied that we have achieved it.

Beyond these broad principles, however, we can still indicate practical and immediate objectives in the field of social and economic justice. I emphasize the word "practical," because we must realise that there is a limit to the speed with which change can be carried through—short of an overturning by violent revolution—though that limit is not nearly so low as some would have us believe.

We might well adopt as our Christian objectives the list of the five simple desires of the people of America, as expressed by President Roosevelt:—

1. Equality of opportunity for youth and others.
2. Jobs for those who can work.
3. Security for those who need it.
4. The ending of privilege for the few.
5. The preservation of civil liberties for all.

Certainly none of us would deny that these five requisites are based upon elementary principles of Christian justice.

Some might seek to go much further towards a real social and economic equality, but if we could fully accomplish only these five objectives in a comparatively short period, we might at least claim to have played some

part in carrying out our Master's direction: "This do, and thou shalt live."

Perhaps it would be wise to spend a moment in emphasising the implications of this list of objectives; for there is little value in setting out objectives unless we are determined to take the steps necessary for their attainment. If it is agreed that they are the embodiment of fundamental Christian principles, nothing should stand in the way of their realisation.

Yet perhaps we ourselves are standing in the way; we may be part of some vested interest, financial or otherwise, which would have to be swept aside in order to reach our objective. It may be that our way of life, our comforts, habits or customs would have to be interfered with.

If jobs are to be provided for all those who can work, great changes will be needed in the planning and organisation of production, for such a thing has never been possible in the past, since industry was mechanised. If privilege is to be ended, then we must be prepared to give up our own privileges with the rest, not excluding the Church's privilege of endowment and of establishment.

If there is to be equality of opportunity for youth, then our children must share a common and equal system of education. If security is to be given to all who need it, we may have to forego many things in order to provide with certainty the necessities that others require.

These examples will indicate how deep are the implications that we as individuals must face, and that the Church must confront, if our Christianity is to become

a living force, and if the rule of God is to permeate our society.

The Church itself must show its faith in its own message, regardless of all cost; for either the Christianity in which we believe is no more than the whitened sepulchre of the Pharisees or else it is the most real thing in our lives. No Church dares preach social salvation unless it works for social justice.

As for the rest, the hardest part of our task will be to convince the world that no private or selfish interest is to be allowed to stand in the way of the full application of the principles in which we believe. Those principles must be given preference over material gain and advantage. But we must first show by example the strength and power of our faith. To that end we must band together in the fellowship of our religion. Our principles must not only be applied in persuading others to act, but they must become part of our own burning and fanatical convictions, controlling our every action.

There can be no excuses for neglect and no cooling off of our enthusiasm, if we are to succeed. People speak to-day of frustration, of life without a purpose, but here, in the carrying out of our Christian duty, lies the greatest of all purposes, the fulfilment of God's intention, and through that fulfilment the creation of happiness and joy in the world.

At no time has the challenge to our personal faith been more insistent than it is to-day. The world is reeling under the blows of a brutal and materialistic aggression; but we shall not succeed by outdoing the brutality and materialism of the evil forces which are against us. Our

strength must be based upon our faith in God and in humanity. It is tragic for the world that this great moral power and dynamic will for victory over evil should remain locked in our hearts and be of little or no avail in the struggle for supremacy.

Neither the Christian community nor the churches have yet used the key that can unlock this great potential force; sometimes it seems that they have lost the key, hardly being concerned even to search for it.

When we come to see our objective clearly, we shall not see an easy and pleasant path, but a hard and difficult way, fraught with danger. At the end of that road we shall, however, discern our goal, the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth, the social salvation of our people and of the world. We shall have embarked upon a most glorious adventure, from which none of us must look back.

## CHAPTER II

### *Our Individual Responsibility*

WHY DO WE TROUBLE about religion at all? Does it really mean anything to us? Is it merely the survival of a rather ignorant superstition, of which we ought to be half-ashamed?

The first thing that we must realise is that it either means everything or nothing. There is no half-way position that it can occupy in our lives.

If the teaching of Christ is true in substance, then we have been born into a world of God's creation in which His purpose is being manifested and worked out. We cannot prove this fact in the way in which we try to prove a scientific law, because we are incapable of observing the supernatural working of the divine mind. We must either accept or reject this fundamental hypothesis as the basis of our life here on earth.

If we reject it, then, truly, religion is to us nothing more than a mystical superstition, and we pursue it only as a kind of insurance, in case there may, after all, be something in it. Our fear of death, and our hope that there may be some life after death, may lead us perhaps to a self-deception that appears at times comforting but which is in the last resort empty and meaningless.

If on the other hand we have faith in Christ, then we must accept His teaching as the most profound human

interpretation of God's purpose. It is the explanation in simple terms, easily understood by the very ordinary people to whom He preached, of the way of life which we must adopt, if we are to realise the object of God's creation.

To appreciate the meaning of what He taught, we do not need to be any more skilled in theology than were the simple folk whom Jesus chose as His disciples.

Our faith is not concerned with the theological complexities that have grown up around and encumbered Christ's teaching over the last nineteen hundred years, nor with the ritual, dogma, or symbolism of particular creeds. These may help some in their devotion and may turn away others, but they are not essential to our faith in God's purpose as disclosed to us through the words of Jesus.

The essence of those words, and of our Christian faith, is the brotherhood of man, in love. The Kingdom of God upon earth is to be achieved, and it will be accomplished through this divine power of love. The outward and visible sign of that inward and spiritual grace is a brotherly and self-sacrificing co-operation in ordering the affairs of this world.

It is not difficult to realise that if, and it seems to-day to be a very big if, all our human relationships were to be so regulated, we should indeed win the Utopia which, in one form or another, has been so often pictured for us as the ideal at which we aim.

The self-satisfied forecasts of those who believed in the essential kindness and goodwill of mankind, with its inevitable development through scientific discovery

to a better and happier state of civilisation, have been rudely shattered. Science has made our lives more dangerous, more tragic and more brutal, through its application to the methods of mutual destruction and torture. What at one time was taken to be a clear and easy road to happiness has in fact led us to the chaotic disaster of Hitlerism. Unless there is some purpose greater than man's purpose, who is to say that Hitler's ways and ideals are not right and will not triumph?

It is only if we have and accept some standard outside and above our human selves, such as that set before us by Christ, that we can have a touchstone by which we may, with complete confidence, judge of the rightness or wrongness of any human course of action, whether it be Hitler's or our own.

Our weakness or selfishness in not obeying God's purpose has brought us to the pass in which we now find ourselves.

Our power as Christian individuals to follow Christ's rule of life is dependent not only upon our firmness of character but also upon the environment in which we find ourselves. In the past, we have ourselves, either positively or by neglect, helped to create that environment. The laws that we as democratic electors have enacted, the customs that we as citizens have built up, and the social habits which in our separate interests we are daily creating and changing, all form part of those surroundings to our life which play so large a part in determining whether it is practicable for us to live lives according to our Christian faith.

We may allow ourselves to get inured to evil condi-

tions in our city or country by passively allowing their continued existence, as for instance poverty, slumdom and ill-health. We may on the other hand help to create in a positive way unhappiness or tragic suffering by our self-seeking, our jealousy and our personal acquisitiveness. A wrong sense of values, absorbed from our material surroundings, may blunt the whole purpose and effect of our Christian beliefs.

We have then a double task before us. First, so to conduct ourselves as individual Christians that, in spite of the difficulties of our surroundings, we may work towards the establishment of God's Kingdom here on earth; and second, so to influence and change our social, economic and political environment as to encourage both ourselves and others to take the Christian way of life.

Neither of these tasks is easy. The fact that over nineteen hundred years after Jesus was crucified we are experiencing the greatest and most brutal war that has ever been fought proves the difficulty of our objective. The history of those nineteen centuries is filled with the records of brave, self-sacrificing Christians who sought to teach their fellow-men how to follow Christ. Often they were tortured and murdered for their faith, but through their suffering that faith has lived on. The forces against which we now fight with all our might are the forces of tyranny and oppression, of self-aggrandisement and racial exclusiveness, which deny the very basis of our faith. But they are not the only adverse forces that exist in the world. Before this war, Christianity was struggling desperately for its survival against the inequalities and injustices which were allowed and

even encouraged to survive. After the war, the same struggle will have to be fought, but with greater determination.

Unity is strength in every kind of human activity. This is one of those obvious truths easy to obey so long as the unity lies within small dimensions, but much more difficult to follow when the unity is world-wide. This war has accomplished a greater degree of national and international unity than ever before in recent times. The driving force of fear has compelled us, in the hope of survival, to band closely together against the common enemy. Many of us have sacrificed much to the cause of our common defence and survival. Tens of thousands of our fellow citizens have given life itself for our protection. The unexampled heroism of our people and of those with whom we are allied has been a great example of how strength comes with unity. And yet, when we are freed from this pressing fear of catastrophe and conquest, we tend to forget these lessons. Such has been the experience after every war that has yet been fought. It was one experience after the last War.

We as Christians were taught by Christ Himself that we must combine together in our common task; and it is the Church that has been the organ for that Christian co-operation. Yet it is still a weak and ineffective implement in the battle against evil.

What should we say if, in an army ready to meet the enemy, the corporate life of the soldiers was as lax and as ineffective as the corporate life of our Church? Defeat would be inevitable, and we should declare it well-deserved. Christians can no more fight alone than soldiers

can fight without mutual co-operation. We too need Christian discipline and organisation. A communion of spiritual forces is needed as great as the common effort of material forces, if our task of creating the Kingdom of God here on earth is to succeed.

All of us are prepared to give, to our last ounce, to win this war, but how many of us will be prepared to make as great a sacrifice to win the peace for Christ? It all comes back to our sense of true values. We are prepared to combine for our common defence against the enemy; some of us will combine for political purposes; some to protect our interest as traders or workers, but how many are willing to work together effectively as Christians for God's purpose, the greatest purpose in all the world? And yet, without that combination, without the vital strength of a living Church, we cannot muster the forces of Christianity, nor can we inspire the people with faith in a world to be ordered by the brotherhood of man.

Our Church has lost its strength and power because it has failed to give the world the leadership for which it looks. Our communion in the Church is feeble because the Church seems to many of us to be apart from and sometimes almost unaware of the injustices which press upon our people. It is not looked to as the burning and fanatical champion of the poor and of the oppressed, for it has settled down to an easy acceptance of "society-as-it-is," becoming part and parcel of one existing civilisation, with little apparent regard for how far that way of life accords with Christ's teaching or the rule of God. We often sing, or hear sung, Blake's magnificent poem

“Jerusalem,” but do we feel that those splendid and challenging lines are appropriate to our own desires?

“Bring me my bow of burning gold,  
Bring me my arrows of desire,  
Bring me my spear! O clouds unfold,  
Bring me my chariot of fire!  
I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England’s green and pleasant land.”

It is that intense and courageous spirit of happy determination that we must show, if we are to revivify the faith—and power—of our Church.

For we individual Christians are, together, the Church.

We ourselves, in the hard times that lie ahead, times harder than any that we have yet been through, shall waver and falter unless we have a faith and a conviction that we are striving towards a new Christian civilisation. We must have a purpose deeper, more positive, and more compelling, than fear or even self-defence. We need the spirit that drove our ancestors far out into the unknown world as happy singing crusaders in the cause of Christ; we need the knowledge that we can rely upon His promises and God’s purpose to lead us to victory, not only over the forces of evil which face us now, but over those other more subtle, less obvious, but no less powerful forces which will oppose us when the war is over.

The prospect to-day appears so dark, and the one objective so overwhelmingly difficult, that we may be discouraged by the insignificance of our own apparent

power and capability. But if we analyse what we term "the great world forces" we find that they are in fact made up of the millions upon millions of tiny insignificant acts which everyone does every day.

I remember how enormously impressed I was by this fact when I drove up the Burma road into China. That great engineering feat, which may well have altered the whole future history of the Asiatic continent, was built up by millions of little baskets of earth carried by hand by men, women and children, day in, day out, working patiently, courageously, in their country's cause. If each one of them had said: "What can my little basketful do?" no road would ever have been built over those trackless mountains and valleys. It was because they each stuck to their right job, insignificant though it was, that the great end was accomplished in record time.

In the same way, our selfless devotion in a great cause, our continuing and continual acts, each one small and insignificant, will build the Kingdom of God here on earth in the most real and tangible form.

We shall not succeed if we merely seek to save our own souls by our religious exercises, for then assuredly we shall lose them. We must concentrate upon the task, both individually and as members of the Church, of creating the Kingdom of God here on earth. In that task we shall find that our own personal salvation is indissolubly linked with the social salvation of our own people and of all the peoples of the world.

If we ever feel dismayed, as sometimes we shall, or frustrated at our own inability, or at the irritating opposition of others, we can refresh ourselves in the commun-

ion of our fellow-Christians, and strengthen ourselves at the fountain of divine power from which Christ has taught us to draw our inspiration.

Just as to-day the brutality and violence of our enemies, and the intensity of our own suffering, strengthen our resistance and our determination, so must our spiritual force and power react to the attack upon the Christian way of life. We must not be ashamed or half-hearted in our convictions, or apologetic in our advocacy of Christ's way. We know God's purpose, from the very lips of Christ Himself, and in that purpose we must go forward to conquer evil, and to establish His kingdom of love and happiness here in our troubled and tragic world.

## CHAPTER III

### *The Church as Leader*

WE ARE ALL intensely anxious in the part to be played by the churches generally, in guiding our country and the world into the path of Christian progress.

We have experienced the efforts made after the last war by organised religion to influence the course of events. If, in the future, anything effective is to be done, our first duty is to examine the past more particularly, so that we may profit from the successes or failures of those earlier efforts.

We must face the bare fact that after the last war the net result of everything the churches did was failure. The influence of organised religion upon the course of world events was extraordinarily small in the years between the wars, if judged by what has happened in the world. Those who struggled to avoid the dangers of a new war after 1918 saw very little effect from their work, and within a generation the world was once more plunged into a war more fierce and more horrible than any of its predecessors. The churches failed to achieve their purpose; yet why, seeing the earnestness with which millions of men and women were determined that, so far as it lay in their power to do so, they would prevent future wars?

We believe our faith in the Church or Churches to be

right and just. We are certain of its divine origin, and know that if the world could order its life according to the teaching of Christ, we should secure a peaceful and happy future for all the peoples of the world. That faith is a rock of certainty amidst all the uncertain and shifting prospects of the years before us.

Starting from this firm basis of conviction and the equally sure knowledge that the failure after the last war was ours, and not Christ's, we should be able to arrive at some conclusions as to why the churches failed, perhaps discovering the methods by which they may succeed.

As isolated individuals, we can exert very little influence in the world, whereas as units in a corporate body such as a Church, or Nation, we can make our contribution in determining the direction of world progress or regress.

After the last war, I happened to have been rather closely connected with the efforts of the Christian churches to improve matters both in this country and internationally. For some years in the twenties, I was working with the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, and I saw a good deal of the work that was done by that body, both at its international meetings, many of which I attended, and here in our own country.

Those who joined in this work were imbued with a most urgent sense of the need of the world for a Christian outlook in order to heal finally the wounds of the war. There was a general sense amongst the peoples of the world that violence and brutality were not the right

methods to use in settling differences and that some better and more morally defensible way should be substituted. This at least provided a sympathetic atmosphere in which the churches might do their work. In fact, by all external appearances, there was an unequalled opportunity to accomplish something.

The first difficulty and the first success of the World Alliance was the bringing together of representatives of the churches from almost every European country, including those from Germany. Despite the bitter feelings which still existed, and despite the overshadowing and deeply-felt differences concerning war-guilt, it was possible, because of their common Christian belief, to get the nationals of ex-enemy countries to meet and to start the discussion of fundamental problems of international organisation comparatively soon after the cessation of hostilities.

It was apparent that the Christian faith provided a common basis for the exchange of views, which was absent amongst those who were concentrating upon the material problems that arose. In the very earliest days, this coming together of Christians from the ex-enemy countries was resented by others and was considered as being unpatriotic. But as it was courageously persisted in, it came to be recognised as a contribution to the settlement of world problems.

The World Alliance, which had strong and consistent support from the Congregational Union and other churches in this country, represented the great majority of protestant and orthodox churches in Europe and America. It suffered from the fact that the Roman Cath-

olics found themselves unable to participate in its activities. They could not acknowledge the fact that the heretical churches were Christian churches and they were not therefore willing to work with them formally. This was a great weakness for organised religion, as was the fact that the United States of America had refused to participate, a weakness of the League of Nations.

The international conferences of the World Alliance were full of interest, hope and stimulation. I well remember the doubts which the late Bishop Burge, then Bishop of Oxford, had as to the utility of such an organisation and of conferences of this description. When he was persuaded to attend an international conference at Stockholm, he immediately felt the inspiration and hope of such a broadly-based meeting of Christians, and afterwards became deeply interested in the movement in this country.

Yet all those conferences could do, was to make pronouncements upon international issues, giving their support to the League of Nations and any other instrument for international agreement. It was the purpose of these meetings to guide the activities of the churches in the various nations, so that they might all concentrate their efforts upon convincing the people and the statesmen of their respective countries of the need for applying in practice the Christian principles so generally accepted in theory.

I imagine that the internal conditions of religious life were much the same in the various countries concerned; but I can only write of the conditions in our own country. I myself addressed a great number of meetings of

all kinds—of clergy, of diocesan and other conferences, and spoke to the public up and down the country. As Treasurer of the World Alliance, I was able to judge the response, not only in the matter of general interest, but also in the matter of finances.

Some churches were much more alive to the importance of the work than others; yet the greatest interest was taken only by a comparatively few specialists in each Church. It never registered any definite impact upon the broad masses of Christians in this country, and it never permeated the ranks of the ministers as a whole. Indeed, I often found that the layman and woman were more interested in the possibilities than were the clergy, who already had so many special activities in connection with their churches, that additions were not welcomed, particularly so if asked to interest themselves in the work's finance. Much of their time was already spent in trying to finance their own work, and any extra appeals became a burden upon them.

In the result, it proved impossible to raise any but the most negligible funds, and without funds it is impossible to do educational propaganda. To judge of the degree of importance attached to this work by the churches and the people, one might put this sort of comparison. The total annual income of the World Alliance was not a fiftieth part of the money spent annually on the advertising of a single patent medicine!

On that basis of effort it is not, perhaps, surprising that little headway was made. After the first few post-war years, the interest sank lower and lower, until the work became the province of a few keen enthusiasts. As

the dangers and terrors of the last war slowly receded, the spiritual regeneration which had been in evidence during the war became gradually submerged by the materialistic considerations of world economics and politics.

There were other attempts of a somewhat similar nature, such as the Life and Work conferences, much of which centred around that most dynamic personality, the Bishop of Uppsala, Bishop Soderblom.

But, despite all these activities, little or no visible impact was made upon the people or the statesmen responsible for the conduct of world affairs.

Something must have been radically wrong if, with a perfectly good case and initially a receptive public, it was impossible to convince either the people or the members of the churches that Christianity had a real and practical part to play in world affairs.

This is not to say that the people did not realise the importance of the issue, which meant peace or war. Especially in the immediate period after the last war, the feeling of "never again" was very strong, and people were looking round for some escape from the recurring tragedies of war. Yet, conscious of the dangers, anxious as they were to avoid them, and themselves in the majority professing Christians, they apparently failed to appreciate that the solution of their problem lay in the practice of their Christianity.

The reason, I believe, was that the churches had lost their position of moral and spiritual leadership, and had become divorced from the real life of the people. They were regarded rather as theological societies guarding

the true tenets of their particular faith, than as vital social forces working for the betterment of the human race.

The exclusiveness of their dogmas, the theological differences between them, emphasized by their unwillingness to work together in the religious sphere, created an atmosphere which was inimical to their leadership.

There was another most powerful factor which played its part. Christianity in its early days was the champion of the downtrodden and the oppressed; it was a faith for the common people, not merely asserting their equality in a life hereafter, but emphasizing the equal brotherhood of all men on earth. It was preached as an integral part of the life of the people on earth, and its power was derived in no small degree from its conception of the presence of God in the midst of the people, helping and encouraging them to strive, so that their wrongs might be righted and their sufferings alleviated.

By the nineteenth century, and indeed long before, apart from the recurrent religious revolutions, the Church had settled down into an acceptance of society as it was and had ceased to be revolutionary or even progressive in its outlook. It thus lost touch with the hearts of the people, becoming something external and imposed and out of sympathy with the masses, so losing its moral leadership. The parson in this country was looked upon as the squire's junior colleague and not as one of the people. The carpenter and the fisherfolk had stepped up into a superior position and so lost their close contact with the common folk.

The result of all this was to place the churches in a false position. Christianity tended to become a religious

cult having little bearing upon the material side of ordinary life or with politics and economics.

By the more influential the churches were tolerated so long as they did not interfere in political or economic matters, which were held to be outside their sphere, thus emphasizing their isolation from the human problems of this world. They might promise what rewards they liked in the world to come, but they must not work or carry out propaganda for practical improvements in the lot of the masses in this world.

When, therefore, the churches made any pronouncement upon international or national matters, it attracted no widespread attention; in fact, it was often most difficult to get the press to give such statements even an inch of space, where politicians could have columns.

This state of affairs also had its effect upon the churches themselves. They tended to become more parochial in their own outlook and to busy themselves more and more with their own domestic problems of organisation, discipline and finance. Their finances were always a great difficulty, because they failed to convince the mass of the people that their service was worth paying for.

These, at least, were the impressions that I derived from my experience, which included at that time membership of my Parochial Church Council, of the Archidiaconal Conference, the Diocesan Conference and the Church Assembly.

When I come to consider the bearing of these lessons upon the future, my first observation is that the churches must get back into the life of the people if they are to

exercise any influence on our national and international policies.

This does not primarily depend upon their taking a greater part in international affairs. International problems always seem difficult and remote to the ordinary people, far more remote than their own personal problems, which seem to them to depend more directly upon national than international policies. To get close to the people, the churches must show themselves once more the champions of the oppressed and unfortunate here on earth.

That is not to say that the religious leaders should go into politics, but rather that they should be prepared quite fearlessly to lay down the Christian principles which are to be followed, leaving it to the lay-men and women to interpret those principles in terms of political action.

No church can afford to compromise as to what is right or wrong in the material as well as the moral sphere. If they do, then they lose both moral influence and leadership.

This return to the people as moral leaders is, I believe, a first necessity. Once this has been accomplished, a much greater degree of unity between the different churches is essential if Christianity, as such, is to exercise an influence proportional to its power.

The appearance and the fact of that disunity amongst the Christians must enormously weaken their influence. Not unnaturally, people are inclined to say that, until the Christian churches can agree amongst themselves, we cannot be expected to accept their leadership. Where

members of one denomination will not allow members of another to preach in their pulpits or conduct their services, what deduction is the ordinary man to draw? It will be concluded that there are many different forms of Christianity which share nothing but the name. Fine distinctions and theological differences are not and cannot be appreciated by the mass.

This is not a question of having a single Church: different individuals will be attracted by different forms of service and different philosophical approaches to the many theological questions. It is a question of a much closer linkage between churches which, while differing in detail of approach, all agree upon the fundamental teaching of Christ, all likewise asserting the divine origin of that teaching.

Then it is also obvious that the international aspect of Christian teaching requires a great deal more instruction and propaganda upon the broadest scale. It must be made really international in form by the exchange of teachers and preachers between different countries, and a great deal of money will require to be spent on asserting the right and the power of the Church to influence international policies.

This aspect of Christianity is of the utmost spiritual importance to the world. We are to-day suffering not from any lack of technical progress but from a complete lack of moral control of our material achievements. We could indeed afford to give our scientists a rest, if our religious leaders would take up the task of bringing our moral and spiritual progress into line with our material progress.

We can get any amount of effort and of money to hasten our material progress, in which all the nations are in keen competition, but there is no similar urge or effort to inculcate into our political, social and economic life those Christian principles which we believe to be basic to the future happiness of mankind.

The whole history of our recent experiences in this matter must lead us to ask the question, whether we take our Christianity seriously; or perhaps it would be more correct to put the question in a slightly different form: can we persuade Christians as a body, that is, in their corporate capacity, to regard their religious duties and obligations as important as those towards neighbour or country?

As I have already indicated, it is not the function of the churches to elaborate specific political or economic cures for the state of the world. That is a technical matter which requires a different type of experience and a different training to that possessed by the religious leaders and teachers, who, however, are specialists in the subject of human relationships, and should be the elder brothers in the family of which God is the Father, trained and knowledgeable in the matter of the relations between God and man.

It is with these matters that they should concern themselves, insisting upon the conduct of those relationships according to the teaching of Christ.

This is not merely a question of the personal salvation of the individual, though that is in itself a vital and important part of their task, but they must also deal with relations between man and man, both as individuals and

in the corporate form of those relationships, between group and group, or between nation and nation.

It is impossible for Christian teachers to carry conviction to others if they themselves are prepared to compromise with facts or conditions which are essentially unchristian. Take such an example as the Nazi creed, which offends in every kind of matter against the Christian standards. Its conception of a Herrenvolk is the denial of the brotherhood of all men; its treatment of the individual as of no importance save as a part of a totalitarian machine, denies the whole conception of the human family, with its divine origin. Man is regarded as something equal to or less than an animal, and the divine spark which makes him a human being is ignored and denied.

Any teacher or leader of a Church who could tolerate such a state of affairs without protest, would be debasing his Christianity and depriving himself of all power of convincing a free people that there was something divine and inspired in his religious faith.

With this, everyone would agree; it is the extreme case, and yet, on a lesser scale, the same thing has happened constantly in our own country. The churches and their leaders have condoned conditions which Christ would have stigmatised as intolerable, partly perhaps because they could see no way of improving matters, and partly because they had compromised with society as it existed, so giving up efforts of improvement.

It is the function of the Church to create those moral standards compelling material changes. They should not directly concern themselves with the material methods

of bringing about change, whether democratic or revolutionary, but it should be their constant endeavour to interest themselves in the wrongs that are being committed, with a view to assisting in putting them right.

They accept, as they must, the existing political and social structure—"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"—but this should not prevent them from pointing out a more excellent way of social salvation for the peoples. Though they accept the existing state of affairs, they can only do so on the basis that these are a transition to better things.

The false attitude to adopt is one of resignation to the present conditions as a static form of society, as something which it is necessary and desirable to perpetuate. Until we have reached the Kingdom of God on earth, all Christians must strive always to improve and to remedy. A spirit of intolerance of evil, not in the abstract but as seen and experienced daily by the people of our own and other nations, lies at the root of moral leadership in the world.

Nothing is more important for the future of mankind than that we should, by some means or other, gain the acceptance of Christian principles as the basis for all our political actions, national or international. We are as yet a long way from such an acceptance, and the churches, if they are to succeed, have a great opportunity and an enormous task in these years before us.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Youth and the Future*

THERE IS A SPECIAL PART that is to be played in the churches by youth, to whom, after all, the whole future belongs. Many of our young men and women have entered the various training units in the country during the war. This is partly due to a desire to do something active and helpful in the war situation, partly to the attractions held out by the various organisations, and partly because public opinion, the opinion of families and friends, has convinced them of the need to discipline spare-time activities, if they are to become fully useful citizens in the future, whether to help to win the war or the peace that will follow.

Individual views as to the war, what led up to it, why we find ourselves in this desperate struggle, and what is its purpose and aim, may differ very widely. Some may look upon it as "the sort of thing that happens periodically in the world," a sort of law of nature; others may regard it as a sign of the incompetence of their elders in the past, or perhaps more truly as the effort of the human race, struggling with great economic and social forces, that are only partly understood, to readjust itself to changing circumstances.

The "wicked man" theory will also find supporters, suggesting, wrongly I think, that we should never have

got into these difficulties had it not been for one or two thoroughly vicious individuals like Hitler and Mussolini. No one doubts their being thoroughly vicious, and they are certainly responsible for a great deal of suffering and tragedy, but their power to cause the trouble arose from the chaotic state into which the world had got itself.

But I am not going now into a disquisition on the reasons for the war or what it is really all about; I only want to point out that there must be a great variety of views on this question. It is that wide variety, existing just as much in the older generation, that makes it so difficult to know what steps to take to improve matters.

When a patient has a fever—and you might well think of war as a state of fever in the world—the first thing a doctor tries to do is to find out the cause, because he knows that he can never affect a cure until he has discovered what is wrong. So youth must find out what it is that is wrong with the world, and especially with our part of it, as a first step to doing something about it.

As a nation we can achieve great things, when we all discipline ourselves to work together for a common object. There are, of course, two forms of discipline. The compulsory form, connected with what we term authoritarian or totalitarian control of a community, and the voluntary form, which is that practised in what we term the democratic control.

The first is a rigid type, which entirely overlooks the human characteristics of mankind. It treats them as if they were bits of a machine with no feelings, no likes and dislikes of their own, and forces them into a rigid mould. That is what Naziism has done for Germany,

and has tried to do for the rest of Europe and the world.

It is a sort of attempt to bring order into the world by the unprincipled control of a single man, and every living soul has to be crushed into conformity with his wishes and ideas of what is good for him.

The voluntary discipline of a democracy, on the other hand, comes about when we all willingly submit ourselves to various forms of control because we believe that, by conforming to them, we can best act together to attain what we want, while preserving the maximum degree of freedom for the individual.

We are now fighting for the second sort of discipline against the first.

But it will be realised that it needs much less intelligence and initiative to allow oneself to be forced into doing things, than to reason matters out and voluntarily submit to discipline.

Some considerable degree of discipline is essential. That is shown in every organisation, in factories and offices, in home life—everywhere, in fact, where human beings live or work together. But we have the choice between the two forms, and because we reject the authoritarian form of control, it is essential that we should be prepared to adopt in its place the democratic form of self-discipline.

That is one of the lessons to be learnt by youth in the various organisations they have voluntarily joined; for, though we connect discipline more particularly perhaps with war-time activities and the armed forces, yet it is just as necessary and essential for a democracy in times

of peace. Being citizens of a single nation lays upon us an obligation as well as giving us great advantages. These advantages consist in homes being protected, all sorts and kinds of services being provided for us by our fellow-citizens, transport, light, heat, housing, education, health services, and much else. The more we work together to attain these things, the better off and the happier we are. Yet this is done without force. We discipline ourselves to play our part, just as others do; that is the return we each give for the many benefits that we get by living together in our nation.

Now the thing to observe is that we should get nowhere if we each took a selfish view, doing only that which pleased ourselves. It is, however, the team work that makes our effort effective. The less we think of self and the more we concentrate on the general good of our country and the world, the better we shall all feel. For it is not only a moral and religious precept that selfishness is evil; it is indeed a very practical rule in the working of a democracy.

If only we could all look at our social and political problems from the point of view of what is good for the country as a whole, and not for what is good for us as individuals or class or section of our society, we should find it much easier to solve them.

Yet there is still another point to be discussed. Many people look at the future as if nothing mattered but the material circumstances in which they would have to live. That is not a bit true. Of course we want to see to it that all the people are properly fed and housed, but that, after all, is what we try and do for the animals in the

country, for whose material needs we seem to care more than we do for those of the people.

Happiness for human beings, however, is not only a material state, it has also as its most important part their spiritual side; and we must bring that spiritual, moral and religious part of our life into the consideration of all these material problems.

When we claim that we want justice, liberty, and things of that kind, we are setting up a moral standard which we claim as essential to our future well-being. Yet we must have some firm foundation for that standard. Mere expediency, just what suits us at the moment, is like shifting sands, providing no foundation at all. We must have convictions, beliefs or faith in some sort of moral laws, in some kind of right for which we must be prepared to stand up at all costs.

Christianity does provide youth with just that moral code by which they can judge opinions and actions regarding the future. True Christian conduct will never leave them in any doubt as to what is just and right.

The future is most important for youth, for the simple reason that they will live through it. It is essential, then, for youth to understand the causes for the trouble and tragedy this war has brought upon the world. Each youngster should discuss it, and read about it, until he or she comes to some decision about it. This will give youth a line as to what ought to be done to put things right, to obviate wars in the future, and to have full employment, decent living conditions and happiness for all the people everywhere.

Youth must discipline itself for its part in the life of

the country; some form of discipline is essential if we are to survive as a country, and if youth refuses to discipline itself voluntarily, under a democracy, someone else will effect discipline under a much harder and unhappier form of control.

Youth, too, must look at all the problems of the future, not from a selfish, personal or sectional point of view, but from the angle of what is best for the country as a whole, regardless of individual interests or feelings.

And lastly, youth has to remember that it can never arrive at a sound judgment upon any of these matters unless it has some firm basis by which it can judge right from wrong and justice from injustice.

Our religion supplies us with that means of judging aright, and so we must use our religion in all our political and social judgments.

We see, therefore, that if youth approaches the future along these lines it will discover great possibilities. Peace can be found to be even more adventurous than war; fighting for the right and for justice and living according to individual religious beliefs is not an easy job, but is one bringing immense satisfaction and happiness, even while bringing hardship and poverty. The comradeship and discipline learnt during these years in training organisations will stand youth in good stead, helping each one to play his full part as a citizen in guiding the future of our country.

## CHAPTER V

### *Christian Acts*

IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF that religion should be very much of an everyday affair, and should form the background against which we set all our daily actions. There has undoubtedly been a tendency in recent years to consider religion as an isolated and particular side of life, as something which we primarily associate with Sunday, with a number of attendances, compulsory or voluntary, in Church or Chapel, and as the concern of a body of teachers set apart from the general community by their ordination.

There is no doubt that we should devote a certain amount of our time to private devotions and to public worship, so that we may derive from these periods of religious activities the inspiration and spiritual nourishment that will support our inner life. Just as we set aside regular times to nourish and exercise the body in order that we may be physically fit, so we must nourish and exercise the soul if we are to be spiritually fit for living our ordinary life.

Human life is neither wholly material nor wholly spiritual—it is a mixture of the two and a mixture which must be properly balanced if it is to give the best results.

Not only is there this combination of different aspects in each one of us as individuals, but our social life con-

sists of contacts with numberless other individuals, in each of whom there is this admixture of material and spiritual.

Ever since the earliest days of family and tribal organisation, men and women have sought association into groups of all sorts in order the better to accomplish their desires. Whether these societies consist of nations, clans, or races, or of specialised groupings such as schools or other learned societies, they have a growth and development which is the sum of all the efforts of the individuals who are part of them.

The test of whether or not we succeed in living Christian lives is not to be found only in our personal devotions, but also, and more particularly, in the degree to which we are able as individuals to influence the society in which we live to adopt Christian methods and standards.

The outward and visible sign of the inward spiritual grace which we acquire from our religious exercises is the contribution that we make to the building up of a truly Christian civilisation here and now, in our own country and in the world.

Our personal relationship with God is something that is completely private and apart from the world, but the effect of that relationship should colour the whole of our actions in our human contacts. Nothing is made more clear in the teachings of Christ than that our behaviour to others in this life is a test of the reality of our religious faith. We are taught to envisage our human relationships as if they were relationships with God Himself. The same standards are to apply towards our brother-

Christians as towards our Father, God. Christ presents to us, in His teachings, the analogy of a human family, where the standard of behaviour to all members should be the same, though the degree of respect and reverence to the head of the family may be greater, and certainly at the period when Christ lived on earth was very much more marked than it is now.

Christ's saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them," was intended to emphasise the fact that we could judge men by their acts. It is almost impossible for any of us to judge others by their thoughts. So difficult is it for us to get into the mind of another human being, that it is idle to attempt to discover the why and wherefore for his actions. But of the actions themselves we can certainly judge.

This is not to say that motive is unimportant; indeed, the motive for our actions may in some cases be more important than the actions themselves, but of motives we are often bad judges, because we tend to imagine that others will be actuated by the same motives as ourselves. It is not at all unusual for an individual to betray the inner workings of his own mind by his criticism of others, and such criticism is often not characterised by an excess of charity.

It is easier and better, therefore, to adopt the criterion—"By their fruits ye shall know them."

Our fruits or actions fall into two broad classes: the private individual act, such, for instance, as our personal devotions, which have a less direct effect upon society as a whole; and the public social act, which directly influences the rest of our society, such, for instance, as the

casting of a vote in an election or participation in the work of any social or political organisation.

Indirectly, of course, every action of ours has its repercussions and influence upon the life of our society; that is inherent in the fact that we live in an atmosphere of human contacts.

It is the sum of these public social acts of all the individuals in our society that determines the action of that society itself. If everyone in a nation, with the exception of one individual, fails to act or acts only in accordance with the dictates of that individual, we reach the state of human dictatorship which has been so tragic for mankind. The will of the Führer is substituted for the Christian motive, with disastrous results to humanity. It is for this reason that human dictators fear, and so abhor, religion. We may, in this instance, recall Browning's poem "Instans Tyrannus." The tyrant lays "his last plan to extinguish the man," and the poem ends with the tyrant's complaint:

"Do you see? Just my vengeance complete  
The man sprang to his feet,  
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts and prayed,  
And *I* was afraid."

Since we can judge men by their social actions, then it is a true test as to the influence which Christianity is having in men's lives to examine what are the fruits of their social actions. This is to say, we can take what actually happens in the world or in our country and examine it to see whether it accords with the principles of our

religion. If it does, then we have the best proof that the people, or a majority of them, are living their religion and not merely paying lip service to it. If on the contrary we find the conditions are not in accord with Christ's teachings, then we have the proof that, however many may profess Christianity, so few are living their faith, that they are not able to influence the actions of society as a whole.

If, as Christians, we look at the present-day results, after nearly 2,000 years of Christian teaching, we must be gravely dissatisfied. Many of our social conditions and relationships fail to reach the Christian standard of brotherly respect and love which is at the root of the teachings of our religion. The contrasts between the material circumstances of individuals are greater to-day than they were in the times when Christ criticised them in Palestine, and one cannot imagine Christ commanding the present state of our own country or of the world, quite irrespective of the war.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that along certain lines modern society conforms better to the Christian ethic than did, let us say, Roman society in the first century A.D.

We have certainly advanced in some directions. Take such matters as the administration of justice, the abolition of slavery, the treatment of criminals and our general outlook upon social problems of many kinds. In these we have approached more nearly to the Christian attitude, and that has been due to the slowly-maturing influence of Christian teaching and teachers. But, at the same time, those sociological and political problems have

become far more complex than arise out of the over-rapid, technical advance and the growth of our knowledge and use of natural resources and forces.

With these advances we have not been able to keep pace, because we have become so absorbed and interested in our own material accomplishments that we have neglected the moral aspect of our problems. Like a child with a new mechanical toy, we have become fascinated by our own cleverness and discoveries. We have become enthralled by the development of our techniques, to the exclusion of all thought as to the purpose they shall serve.

What, some may ask, has religion to do with aeroplanes, railway engines or the thousand and one material inventions that we have made? Are we not the discoverers and inventors, have we not conquered nature, and cannot we do as we wish with our conquest?

Broadly speaking, the urge towards discovery and invention has been partly the spirit of adventure in man and partly his constant effort to improve his standard of living and of comfort. He is perpetually forging new tools with which to fashion the progress of his own life and that of his society. But these instruments of power that man has created can be used for many different purposes, some good and some bad. The uses of the aeroplane are an excellent example of this fact.

Mankind may easily destroy itself by its own intelligence. Science developed for the improvement of human conditions can easily be turned to the destruction of humanity. Behind the merely material use of these things lies the purpose for which they are used, the objective

at which we are all the time consciously or unconsciously aiming.

It has often been said that we have allowed the machine to master man, instead of asserting the mastery of man over the machine. But that is only a half-truth. Even if man masters the machine, as he certainly has done most tragically in the course of this war, there is no certainty that he will use his mastery in the cause of justice and freedom. Selfish men, greedy for power, will misuse the tools of power to try and fashion an essentially unchristian civilisation.

The control of this flood of new technical achievements is vital for the future of the human race, and that control must be towards a state of society that we believe to be right and just.

We can certainly never arrive at any decision as to the rightness and justice of that social control by an examination of the technical merits of our inventions. We must have some standard by which to judge what we believe to be fundamentally right and just. It is therefore of the essence of our proper use of these technical advances that we should have a firm and unchallengeable moral basis with which to control their use. And that is what our religion has to do with aeroplanes and railway engines. The controlling power must be neither the machine, nor the man, but the power of God within men.

It is obvious, therefore, that we cannot isolate particular times or periods of our lives to do this service of exercising the power of God within us. We may well, and indeed must, set apart times to refresh ourselves

spiritually, so that we may the better serve the Christian purpose throughout our waking hours.

But our task as Christians is a daily and hourly task of our ordinary lives, and is not one that can be performed merely on one day in seven.

Running all through our life, and our life's activities, and determining our judgment in every case, must be the power of God in us, which we may sometimes refer to as our conscience.

Our Christian faith must be the touchstone, the standard to which we can refer all our problems. Our conception of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, must be based upon the teaching of Christ, for that is the only firm basis upon which we can build our lives or our society.

So when we wonder what should be the relationship of our everyday work, our politics, or our social activities to our religion, the answer is, that our religion should be the basis of everything that we do. When we decide whether to take this or that action, we must arrive at our decision in the light of our Christian faith. In no other way can we make the society in which we live a Christian society.

But has Christianity the right basis? If Christ was, in fact, divine, then there can be no argument as to whether His teachings were the best, nor can there be any dispute as to whether He intended them for our guidance here on earth. He has given us the final and divinely authoritative moral code by which we can judge every word we speak and every action we do. We, on our part, must exercise our own initiative in the application of that

judgment, not to whittle it away, but to give it the fullest scope in our everyday life.

Spiritually and morally, our Christian faith should be all-pervading, and is as essential to our well-being as in the material sphere is the air we breathe. It is aptly described as the breath of life, without which we perish morally, itself the precursor to material destruction.

What the world requires for its revival and reconstruction is not further technical and material achievements, but a deeper and more realistic appreciation of moral values: a sounder basis upon which to found both judgment and action.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Industry and Christianity*

WE HAVE NOW to deal with a very difficult and most complex subject, the relation between our Christian religion and our industrial effort.

It might seem to some people that the two matters are unrelated, and yet there is no part of our life that can be unrelated to our religion, if our religion is a living reality.

In a special number of *St. Mary's Chronicle*, the magazine of the Parish of St. Mary's, Chatham, there recently appeared an article by the Rector of Chatham, treating of the relationship between religion and the life of the Medway Towns, primarily an industrial life.

A quotation or two is appropriate to our theme, and these are the sentences which start with a reference to certain groups of investigators working in that area:—

“These groups were got up to answer the crucial modern problem of work for all after the war. In this, all are convinced that the solving of this problem is fundamentally a Christian objective.

“But the direct outcome of this group is the Medway Towns Use Your Vote Society. For it was seen that the common root of both the Christian religion and of democracy is the personal responsibility of each member of society to control and direct his free and conscious

choice of the highest he can apprehend in all spheres of life. This realisation emerged so clearly that the few are now going out to the many to put this objective before them, and to set up the highest common standard as the lodestar of the unorganised goodwill evident in all kinds of people throughout the towns.

"We all want jobs. We all want political freedom and a Government which efficiently serves the common interests of a responsible community. These are good desires implanted by God in the people. We are taking new bearings to fulfil those desires aright. The Church of the Medway has a tremendous part to play and has received its stage directions in the unfolding drama of a great age of the Spirit."

These sentences, I feel, emphasize the direct and intimate connection between our Christianity and our political and economic life. The organisation and inspiration of our industrial effort is the major matter in our political and economic life.

My own recent and fairly intense experiences in the industrial field have impressed upon me one thing in particular, and that is, that the problem of human relationships is the most vital and important part of industrial efficiency. And upon that industrial efficiency, in its broadest sense, depend our future welfare and prosperity.

Going, as I have, round hundreds of factories of all sorts, kinds and sizes, I have been struck by the very wide and varying range of efficiency between different factories doing the same job.

This is partly due, no doubt, to differences in the scale

of equipment or to the varying suitability of buildings or even to the degree of experience in doing a particular job, but in the majority of instances, a large part of the variation can be traced to the relationships between the individuals in the production team which is constituted of Directors, Management, Technicians, staff and employees.

Most people have had this same experience in one way or another. We know how any work that we set out to do can be hampered or helped by the human environment in which we try to work. One or two individual misfits can spoil the work of almost any team.

In industry there has been, in the past, a tendency to look upon "labour" as if it consisted of so many "bodies," much as one might look upon so many units of machinery. The very fact that the phrase "bodies" is used points to the tendency to disregard the human spirit and mind and to concentrate upon the arms, hands and legs as the only useful and material part of the men and women who work in the factories.

This attitude has, however, changed in recent times, and it is gradually being realised that the problem of industry is the problem of human beings and human relationships. Directly this fact is realised, it becomes abundantly clear that our religion, which is so intimately concerned with the whole range of our human relationships, has a very close bearing upon our industrial efficiency and so upon our standard of life.

By the phrase "standard of life," I mean not only the mere matters of food, clothing and warmth, but also educational and cultural facilities and amenities, everything

in fact that goes to make up what we might term "the decent life."

Two things are primarily required to give us those higher standards of living we all desire. These are, first, an efficient method of organising production, and second, a just method of distributing the products of industry amongst the people. If these two aims could be accomplished, we should be able to achieve the highest practicable standard of living for all our people.

I am here concerned with the efficiency of industrial production. I have attempted to point out the fact that this efficiency depends very largely upon good human relationships in industry itself; now let us go a little more closely into that question of human relationships in industry from our Christian standpoint.

Perhaps the first, the most important and the most general principle that we must apply, is the equality of all men before God.

This does not, of course, mean that all men are equal in strength or brains or intelligence. There is an infinite variety; but it does mean that all men have the same spiritual attributes and are consequently to be treated equally as human beings and as Children of God. They all share the same dignity of spirit, whatever may be their colour, class or religion.

No one has any right in his relationships with others in industry, therefore, to treat them as if they "did not matter." All are entitled to an opinion and all are bound to make their best contribution to the work of the team.

All cannot of course be at the top, though all should be equally able to reach the top; the management must

manage, which is their work, and the employees must do their own individual work, whatever it may be; but all are fellow human beings working together for a common purpose. That purpose is not to enrich themselves but to serve the community. It is essential that we should appreciate and acknowledge this fact.

We have, perhaps, too long regarded industry as a matter for the private individual. Except in times of war, when we realise only too well the direct bearing of production upon the survival of the community as a whole, we have regarded the provision of the necessities of life as a responsibility of individuals, acting under the urge of their own personal gain.

This certainly cannot be the Christian view of industry. We must regard the provision of the necessities of life as a service for the whole community. However we may organise that production, whether on the basis of private or public enterprise, it must still remain a community service, its object being the service given, not the personal gain or advantage of the individual.

It is part of our equality that we should all equally serve. This is indeed the second Christian principle which we must apply to an industry, the principle of Christian service.

Industry has been looked upon as a means of making profits, or salaries, or wages, the higher the better, rather than as a means of contributing service to the community.

It is true that in times of war the emphasis has been put upon service. All the industrial propaganda that has been carried out during the war has strongly emphasized

that aspect of duty, to the country and to one's fellow-citizens and to the cause of the United Nations and the world. Yet the implication behind a great deal of this propaganda has been that that is only a war-time attitude, that when the war is over there will be a reversion to the competitive, acquisitive aspect of industry and that the need for service and duty will disappear. Surely it is more important to serve the community in providing, say, houses, than in providing guns and shells? The one is constructive, the other destructive.

Without something better than the mere material and profit-snatching background to industry in times of peace, however, there will be no incentive to service. That background is provided by the Christian principles and the Christian teaching. It is of the essence of Christ's teaching as to our human relationships that we should serve our fellow-men, and that idea of service should pervade our whole active life.

The third principle that we must apply to life, is that it is our Christian duty to care especially for the weak and feeble. It is contrary to every Christian idea that we should take advantage of such persons for our own benefit. It was the complete neglect of this principle that led to the necessity of the State stepping in to protect women and children in industry in the middle period of the last century. More and more has it been necessary to pass laws and regulations protecting those who were not strong enough to protect themselves. In matters of hours and conditions of work, every advantage was taken of them, and there are still cases to-day where it is absolutely necessary to provide that protection and to em-

ploy inspectors to see that the protective regulations are carried out.

Dead-end occupations are a typical instance of this danger, as are the long hours that young persons are made to work. Another and far more common example is the complete lack of opportunity for any form of continued education for young persons engaged in industry, thus cramping their whole spiritual and cultural development. It should be a natural Christian duty to see that young people, who provide a comparatively cheap form of labour, are at least given the opportunity to continue to learn, improving their value to society and their own position.

These are examples of what it means in practice to apply Christian principles to our industrial life. If those principles were in reality accepted and acted upon, it would not be necessary to pass laws to put right the abuses in industry; those abuses would never occur.

Though the fact that such laws are passed is a proof of the Christian conscience in the community as a whole, the necessity for them is equally a proof of the lack of Christian conscience in the individuals responsible. This is not to suggest that all our industrialists are unchristian in their business relations. Some of them do really believe that honesty is the best policy, and they act up to that belief. But there are others, unfortunately, who have no such belief, and the debased moral coin which they put into circulation has a strong tendency to put out of circulation the more honourable and just code. They undermine, by their actions, the whole structure of our industrial life.

The development of the Trade Union movement, however, has done much to give the workers a more equal status in industry. More recent developments, such as the Joint Production Committees set up by agreement between the Employers' Federation and the Trade Unions, have carried the matter a stage further. Democracy has been introduced into our economic life for the first time, and to that extent the employees have acquired a status which at least acknowledges their interest in the means of earning their own livelihood.

The protection of the weak and feeble has been done by legislation, though there has, even so, been a much fuller realisation throughout industry of the need not to exploit the weak. Yet there are still a great majority of all sections of those engaged in industry who regard it as a method of personal gain, rather than a service to the community. This is inherent in the present method of private enterprise, and so it will be profitable to examine the wider and more fundamental issue.

It is argued that the profit motive is itself unchristian and indeed that it makes impossible the conduct of industry according to Christian standards. There are as many, and probably more sincere, Christians who take the opposite point of view, insisting upon the right of the individual to maintain his property and so his profit-earning capacity. An example of this can be found in a broadcast message of the Pope's, with its strong emphasis upon the right of individual ownership.

Now, in this matter of property, there is apt to be a great confusion of thought because, from the point of view of human and Christian relationship, there exist two

entirely different categories of private property. The first is constituted of all those articles that are required for personal use and enjoyment, such as the home, the garden, furniture, pictures, musical instruments, clothing, and so forth, the possession of which does not affect the relationship of the individual to other individuals. The possession of these, apart from the possibility of their creating a feeling of jealousy in those who do not have them, does not alter the relationship between an individual and his neighbour.

The second category is quite different in its incidence upon human relationships. This category includes the ownership of land, and of any means of production other than for personal use. This class of property does alter the relationship between individuals, because it puts one person in the power of another. That is to say, it enables one individual to affect and influence the life of another. Property in land creates the relationship of landlord and tenant, a relationship that the State has had to attempt to regulate by all sorts of laws in order to minimise the hardship that may result to the tenant from the arbitrary act of the landlord.

In the consideration of industry, we are more directly concerned with property in the means of production—the factory buildings and machinery and the finance that is necessary for the running of industry. In this case, the private ownership creates the relationship of master and servant, or of employer and employees. Here again, as I have already pointed out, the State has had to step in to moderate the harshness of action of the individual who is given power through his ownership of the means

of production to create conditions of hardship and poverty for his neighbour.

There is nothing inherently wrong or unchristian in the ownership of private property; it is only when the nature of that ownership is such as to enable the arbitrary act of one individual to affect adversely the life and standards of another, that there is a danger and a problem which calls for our attention as Christians.

Now there are three ways of dealing with this problem. The first is to accept the danger and to attempt to moderate or eliminate it by the conversion of all people to true Christian ideals in human relationships, so that the danger is overcome by the goodness of the individual, to work for the state of affairs in which every land-owner and employer conducts his affairs according to true Christian principle.

The second is for the community or State to step in and so regulate conditions of tenants and employees as to remove as much of the danger as possible. In other words, for the State to protect the individuals against what is recognised as the inevitable dangers of the situation. This method can of course be employed side by side with the first. That is to say that, while the Churches attempt to remove the danger, the State meantime gives its protection.

It is perhaps worth discovering the reason for our reliance upon the State's protection. The basic assumption is that the community as a whole is more likely to be Christian-minded in these matters than the individual. The community, unlike the individual, is not tempted by profit or by the desire to gain personal power, and so

can examine the relationships in an impartial manner, and with an eye to justice and equity rather than to individual advantage. The State is, in fact, accepted as the nearest that we can get to an impartial judge in any matter, though the degree of impartiality will, naturally, depend upon the nature of the controlling power in the State. If that controlling power represents particular interests, then the decisions of the State will tend to favour those interests against others; if, however, we have a true democracy in the State, then there is less liability for the State to favour any particular section or class of the community.

In either case, it will be realised how important it is that the actions of the State should be based upon true moral or Christian principles, if those actions are to be fair and right.

That fundamental moral background in a democracy can only come from the insistence of the people as a whole; hence the need for the inculcation of Christian principles throughout the whole mass of the people.

The third alternative is to remove the danger by abolishing all types of private property that give one individual power over another, and to place that property in the hands of a democratically controlled State.

As we have already seen, under the second alternative, the State is accepted as the best we can do in attaining impartiality, and it is this principle which also lies behind the third alternative. We place the power over the lives of others in the hand of the most impartial authority we can, an authority which can itself be influenced by the views of those others.

This will not diminish but increase the necessity for a

Christian background for State action. The State will have a complete control over the relationships between the various categories of workers in industry, and must therefore attempt to regulate those relationships upon a Christian basis.

We have so far attempted in this country to deal with the problems of industry under a combination of the first two alternatives, though the Churches have not been very successful in persuading Christian standards to be adopted by those who exercise the power attached to ownership of property. Some of these powerful persons have done their utmost to apply Christian principles in their conduct, but their task is made difficult, if not impossible, by the almost overwhelming number who make no attempt to apply any moral principles to their industrial relationships.

It is the comparative failure of the first two alternatives stated that has made many people regard the third alternative as preferable and as more likely to make it possible to apply Christian principles in industry.

I believe this myself, but with one proviso, which is, that the democracy controlling the State's actions must be imbued with the Christian spirit. A democracy with purely materialist standards could hardly be expected to bring Christian principles to bear upon the organisation of its industry, though even so, it is probable that the mass judgment of the community would get nearer to justice and equity than the judgment of the interested individual.

From the Christian point of view, there seem to be no fundamental arguments which can be raised against our third alternative. I know of no Christian principle

or teaching which lays down the sanctity of private property, though there are many, of which I have cited some, which deal with human relationships.

Certainly, the other alternatives have been tried over long periods. The first, absolutely free private enterprise relying on the Christian beliefs of the individuals to moderate their action, resulted in the scandals of child employment in the mills and mines, and compelled the State, at the instigation of such people as Lord Shaftesbury, to introduce the second alternative of State control of industrial relationships. This has been helped by a strong defensive Trade Union movement for the protection of the workers, but even so, none of us can be satisfied with the pre-war conditions, particularly as regards the inability of industry to employ great numbers of the people or to accept responsibility for the unemployed.

Yet what are we to do as Christians? It was very largely the more active Christians in this country who insisted upon the State introducing measures of control. Should they not now insist upon the logical completion of that process of control so as to remove altogether the danger of one individual exploiting another, rather than merely attempting to regulate the degree of exploitation?

This is not an economic question, which is for economists, but one for a body of Christians who believe that Christ has given us a set of divine rules by which to regulate our own lives and our relationships to our neighbours. On the answer to this question must depend the material health, happiness and prosperity of our community.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Army of Christ*

WE ARE passing through the final stages of five years of struggle, in which we have accommodated ourselves to the single purpose of survival and victory. That victory we have sought because it was the only alternative to defeat and also because we believed that the forces against which we were fighting were evil forces.

In some sense, this concentration of our thoughts and energies upon these immediate, urgent and practical objectives has made us narrow in our outlook. We have had neither the time nor the energy to consider the long-term results of what is now happening. Our Messianic mission as soldiers of Christ has tended to be overshadowed by the pressing cares and tragedies of our war-time life. We have, too, become callous to some extent, and perhaps even brutalised by the daily recurring experience of acts of violence, any one of which in normal times would be counted as a major disaster.

We read with interest, and perhaps even with satisfaction, of battles and bombardments in which thousands of human beings are destroyed. We have accustomed ourselves to man-inflicted death upon a hitherto unknown scale.

Now that the approach of the end of these horrors and tragedies can be seen more clearly, we must condi-

tion ourselves to the new state of affairs and to the new and different problems that we shall have to solve.

We now realise that when a worker has met with an accident at his work or has had his health affected by the conditions in which he works, he must have treatment, followed by a period of rehabilitation, before he is fit to resume his work. Similarly, we require a spiritual rehabilitation before we can tackle these new problems or work in the new atmosphere which the cessation of hostilities will create.

It would be tragic for the world if we were to tackle the new and hopeful period in world history before us with our war-time mentality and outlook.

There is no doubt that the soldiers of Christ have had to work in the most difficult conditions during the last five years. They have been constrained to take part in activities which, though they may conceive them to be right, are not conducive to the Christian virtues that should direct our peace-time activities.

We have been fighting to prevent our Christian democracy being overrun by the materialist authoritarianism of the Nazis, and we have been morally on the defensive. We now have to prepare ourselves to exert a positive and constructive influence as Christians upon the development of our own national society and of the world.

It is only too easy to see how, already, anti-christian and indeed anti-democratic forces are preparing themselves to gain all the power they can by taking advantage of the disorganisation which is likely to follow on the end of the war.

Christ's followers in the world, those who honestly

and genuinely believe in His teaching, have had many opportunities in the past, at critical moments in the history of the world, to exert their influence and to give spiritual leadership to their fellow-men, yet never has there been so great an opportunity as that which now offers.

Unless we can secure the application of Christian principles in our national and international life to a considerable extent, we are bound once again to fail and to relapse into the inhuman and materialistic competition which has already so often brought disaster to the world.

But the fact that we now have this great opportunity in the battle for the soul of humanity that lies before us, means that it is essential that we should rally and train our forces to that high purpose. It is no easy task, and we certainly cannot perform it without each one of us, as individuals, making certain of the strength of our own beliefs and of our own faith. It will indeed be a time of testing, and we may have to make many sacrifices and do a great deal of hard work if we are to succeed. As every army needs discipline, instruction and training, Christians too cannot make themselves effective unless they are ready to subordinate material desires to duty as soldiers of Christ. Christian faith and effort are individual matters; disciplined power as a body of persons determined to achieve one goal is a community matter.

That is why this service, in which we are all partaking to-day, is an essential element in our preparation. As individuals we can renew our faith and strengthen our determination at the altar of Christ; as a community we come together to dedicate ourselves to His service.

Our corporate act of worship should, like the drilling

of an army, enable us to work in unison at our common task and should discipline us as Christians to the work that lies ahead of us.

I sometimes feel that many of us take our Christian obligations too lightly, failing to realise that direct connection between faith and life. The material factors that affect life are so much easier to see and appreciate that we fail to note, and so undervalue, the spiritual factors which are of fundamental importance.

We may want the best of organisations nationally and internationally to carry out our purposes, but they will be of no avail unless we can marshal behind them the true spirit of Christ.

During these years of war, we have accomplished wonders, and we have achieved almost the impossible, because a common driving force has constrained the whole nation to its greatest effort.

Many of our young people have given their lives in that effort, believing in all sincerity that through their sacrifice a better future was in store for their country and the world.

To them we owe a deep debt of gratitude which places upon us the heavy obligation to keep faith with them in their hopes, and to do our utmost to ensure that their lives have not been given in vain.

When the war is over, we must have another and higher common purpose, if we are to be able to achieve what may seem to be equally impossible, a victory over war, poverty and disease.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Practical Christianity*

MANY OF US, pressed and tried by the tragedy of war, have felt the urge to consider once again those profound truths of our Christian faith, which we have in less stormy times taken too much for granted, or even largely neglected.

In these latter years, the emphasis of our lives has certainly tended to be upon the material side. We have been thrilled and stimulated by the great technical advances that mankind has made during our generation. At no time in the history of the human race has material progress been so rapid. The ingenuity and inventiveness of man has never before blossomed so luxuriantly with the flowers of practical achievement. It is as if suddenly, during the past few decades, all the stored and accumulated knowledge of centuries had been crystallised into those useful devices and those methods of controlling the great natural forces, which can give us immense new possibilities for a better and happier life.

It is no wonder that our young people should concentrate upon these new devices, the wireless and the aeroplane, the motor car and the machine tool, and all the wonderfully ingenious apparatus of our modern industrial and scientific world.

When man has shown himself so intelligent and so

capable of harnessing the natural forces, it seems unnecessary for him to turn to God. The old mysterious view of life, based upon scientific ignorance, regarded the thunder and the lightning, the rain and the winds, illness and disease, as the instruments of God's power, rather than the perfectly natural phenomena which we now know them to be. When these mysteries were cleared away by our better understanding of the processes of nature, it tended again to make men feel that the conception of God was not necessary, that the myth of God had been explained away by the scientist.

These are some of the reasons why the material outlook upon our problems has been over-emphasized. We have become too self-reliant and too much centred upon our own ingenuity and cleverness. The war, however, has changed that for many of us. We have learnt most bitterly that, with all his cleverness, man has only brought about his own destruction. Wireless, aircraft, ships, submarines and motor cars are now the instruments of death and destruction. We have learnt how to build them, it is true, but not, alas, how to control them. We have excelled on the material side, but not on the moral side. It is this neglect of moral and spiritual values which has brought the world to its present appalling plight.

There is, undoubtedly, something severely practical we must set out to accomplish. This is in the right control of the great material forces that we have conjured up. It is very much the concern of each one of us, because upon our power to control the material forces will depend our happiness, our peace and our welfare for the rest of our lives.

I put aside for the moment the question of fitting ourselves for the life hereafter, not because it is unimportant, but because the problem of our life in this world is immediate and pressing. It is not necessary for me to argue this case for the moral control of our material resources. It is too obvious at this very moment throughout the world. If all the vast effort of the war had been consciously directed according to the moral concepts of our Christian religion, we should to-day be enjoying a happiness and prosperity unexampled in world history, instead of the misery and suffering of the world's greatest and most brutal war.

That is a simple and self-demonstrating fact which no-one could possibly deny.

How then could we bring about such a change? It is certainly unnecessary for those of us who profess Christianity to have any doubts as to the answer to that question. Christ's teaching was not some recondite and abstruse theological doctrine; it was indeed a statement of the simple rules according to which we should live our lives here on earth. It did not attempt to lay down the details of political Government or social organisation for particular societies or nations. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." But what Christ did do was to lay down for us the moral values which must control our material life. If ever we are in doubt as to how we should act in particular circumstances, social, political or economic, we can find the answer by reference to the moral laws which He taught us.

To use an old phrase, His teaching was to be the "touchstone" of our lives. Christ did not teach some

elaborate and sophisticated religion; what He taught was essentially for the simple people. The importance, to us, of that teaching is that we believe it to have been divine, and therefore beyond question or doubt. There can be no argument as to whether it is right; it is so and must be, because Christ taught it. There can be no question as to its applicability to our lives, because He has expressly told us that it is according to the laws He gave us that we should live, both for present happiness and for future salvation.

Let us therefore keep firmly in our minds the fact that these moral laws are just as necessary and practical, perhaps more so, than the man-made laws which we observe without question. Unless we do that, our lives are one-sided and material, and we have no standards by which to judge right and wrong, except those of mere material expediency. It is this which has in fact influenced so many of us in our actions and that has brought us all to the pass in which we find ourselves to-day.

We are not, therefore, wandering hopelessly and without guidance. We have the guidance, we acknowledge it is right, but we refuse to accept and act upon it. We try and measure our happiness in terms of pounds, shillings and pence, instead of in the spiritual satisfaction of a life well lived.

We seem to have the idea that, somehow or other, we can apply our Christian principles to large far-off topics, as in international affairs or parliamentary legislation, without applying them equally to our own lives. It is quite impossible for the spirit of God to act through us in such a partial way. The first step, if we want to trans-

form the outlook of our people and our country, if we want to see applied in these wider spheres the principles which Christ taught, is to apply them in our own lives, in the home, in the office, in our dealings day by day with all those with whom we come into contact. It is useless professing the most advanced Christian views as to the treatment of other countries, if we cannot regard our own friends and relations as Christians. It is useless insisting upon integrity in public administration if we do not insist upon it in our own dealings. We cannot have one standard for the other man, which we insist upon, and another for ourselves, which we practice.

So the first step to gain this new and severely practical outlook upon the affairs of our country and the world, is for us to adopt the Christian standards in our own lives. Having done that, we shall have the right and the power to influence others in the same direction.

It is that influence alone, I am convinced, which can save us from a repetition of the horrors of war and the tragedy of starvation and unhappiness. There should be enough Christians in the world to accomplish the change, if only they would play their parts individually and as units of their organised churches.

We should remember, however, that we are not any of us morally strong enough to stand alone. We must have the inspiration and refreshment which come from our personal contacts with Christ. We cannot succeed in living Christian lives without that help which He alone can give us both directly and through our fellow-Christians.

If we think of all that we and others have done and

suffered to prosecute this war, surely we can do as much to accomplish the infinitely more worth-while victory over the forces of evil in ourselves and in the world! Suffering humanity calls to us who believe in Christ, asking us to help to find the way out of this abyss of suffering. We know that way; we have an ever-present guide in Christ, but we must walk the path ourselves as individuals, if we desire to lead others.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Positive Forces*

THE CIRCUMSTANCES of the war have undoubtedly engendered a high degree of unselfishness and self-control in the people of this and many other countries. We have all been prepared to sink our personal desires and comforts, without complaint, because we have believed that by so doing we were forwarding the united efforts of our community. Those efforts were for a common purpose, victory over the enemy, and no-one doubted that every personal wish had to be subordinated to the one aim. Yet, though we make this broad generalisation, we must still observe that there are a number of men and women who still allow their own private affairs to interfere with their public duty. If we could really have had throughout this war a 100 per cent. concentration by every individual upon the central purpose of our national life, we should have advanced sooner towards victory.

I draw attention to this aspect of our war effort because I wish to consider what the position is likely to be after war is over. Will there be any force as strong as the common purpose for victory, to hold the people of this country together upon a common path of progress; and, if so, what will that force be? Is it something which exists, or is it something that we must create or develop?

These are questions of vital importance to our own future and to that of the future of mankind, for, without a common effort, we are as certain to lose the peace after this war, as we lost it after the last war.

There are, broadly, two kinds of compelling forces which actuate the ordinary man and woman. There is the negative sort, represented by fear in all its different aspects, and there is the positive variety, of which the outstanding example is love.

President Roosevelt has spoken of the four freedoms as the basis of post-war civilisation, to be accomplished by the removal of the fears, amongst them the fear of want. We have to consider whether the mere removal of fear does in itself provide any permanent basis for freedom. In one of Christ's parables, He illustrated the fact that the mere removal of evil does not of itself create good. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man," He said, "he walketh through dry places seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (St. Luke, 11-24.)

In our society to-day we, in fact, tend to encourage the fear-compulsion force. This is what we mean by competition in the economic field. Each man is put into a position to fear that he may be out-distanced by his competitor and so lose his livelihood. In the same way, the whole idea of the poor law in the past has been to make conditions such that people fear that they may be

driven to have recourse to it, and so are spurred on to try and avoid it.

In M. Maisky's autobiographical study, "Before the Storm," there is a translation of a Russian poem entitled "The Railway," by Nekrasov, which illustrates admirably how the pressure of fear acted in the pre-revolutionary society in Russia.

"Cruel hard the work was, Vanya,  
More than a man's strength could bear.  
But there is a merciless Tzar in the world,  
Hunger—that is his name.

He is captain of the ships on the sea,  
He herds people into the workshops,  
He leads armies, and stands behind  
The backs of weavers and stonemasons.

It was he who drove here masses of people,  
Setting them a terrible task.  
They brought life to these wastes,  
Where many found their graves."

Again, one of the major motives for unity in war is the fear that otherwise we may be destroyed either individually or as a community, illustrated by the old tag, "Let us hang together or we hang separately."

We must, therefore, recognise the fact that to-day our society and our civilisation are built upon the basis that we accept, and even to some extent encourage, fear as a driving force for individual action. The whole idea of punishment for crimes was originally that, by fear,

we could prevent people from committing crimes. In more recent years, there has been introduced another element into our dealings with criminals, the redemptive power of love and discipline.

But motives for actions are nearly always mixed. If you try and think quite objectively why you do this or that, you will find that there are a number of reasons which contribute to your decision to act. The fear of want is a very typical and widespread cause of individual action, but it may well be mixed with pride of workmanship, ambition to succeed, desire to marry and many other motives.

If we are, as President Roosevelt suggests, to remove the fear of want, what are we to put in its place as an instigator of human action? If we are to remove competition in industry, what is to take its place to prevent stagnation and apathy? Or can we leave the void created by the removal of these motives, in the hope that such other more positive motives as I have mentioned will become stronger and greater, and so fill up the empty space?

We can put this question in broader and more general terms. Hitherto our society and our civilisation have been such as to encourage action based upon the selfish, greedy side of human nature to a large extent, though tempered by some of the higher moral qualities. But, basically, it is the "acquisitive instinct" in all its varying forms that has been made use of as the main instigator of our economic and political actions.

If we are to carry out the general desires which have been expressed in a multitude of different ways for a

better Britain, or a fairer and happier world, we shall have to substitute a co-operative and more selfless attitude for this acquisitive individualistic approach to life. We must replace the competitive fear, the negative impulse, by the positive power of love and brotherhood. These latter forces are in themselves the most powerful that exist in the human being. It is only for love and self-sacrifice that men and women will give their all, including life itself. This they will never do for fear or for the mere acquisition of wealth or power. They may be, and indeed they are, prepared to sacrifice the lives of others in the cause of power or the acquisition of wealth, but never will they willingly sacrifice their own lives to that end. There is no human instinct stronger than that which prompts the man or woman to protect their specially loved ones, the father and mother to guard their children, or the idealist to go out after his ideals. That is why Christ chooses the analogy of the husband and wife or the family to illustrate what is meant by Christian love on the wider scale.

I believe that it is essential, if we are to gain those improvements in our society we are looking for, that we should bring about a transition whereby the positive force of Christian love is substituted for the negative forces of fear and hatred; and this, not as some theological or theoretical basis for a new society, but as a most practical matter of politics and economics. We cannot afford—in the true sense of that word—to continue in the old ways. Our Christianity must form the everyday basis for our actions because, as a nation or a community, it will pay us better in the return of happiness,

prosperity and safety to be enjoyed here on earth as apart from the hereafter.

M. Litvinoff once said at Geneva that, now that all the so-called practical people have tried their panaceas and failed, let us try some of the Utopian ideas. To those of us, however, who profess Christianity, there is much more in it than that. We have the deep conviction that there is only one right basis for society, whatever may be the expediencies. It is comforting to know that our Christian principles are in line with the practical necessities of life, though there should be nothing surprising in this to those who realise that Christianity was taught as a "way of life," and not as some, at present, impracticable theory relating only to life in another world.

We are, then, as Christians, faced with the necessity of trying to attain the adoption by our country and by the world of the principles of our Christian faith as the basis for the building of that newer and better civilisation which we seek. Mere material improvement, mere scientific development and invention, may give us the possibility for a fuller life, but cannot secure that happier and better existence for us. The war has surely taught us that all the material advances of mankind may be used as well for its destruction as for the improvement of its conditions. It is the manner in which we use and control these conquests of the forces of nature that is so vital for our future.

There is no better example of this than the aeroplane, which is capable of ameliorating the lot of the human race in many ways, but is equally capable of destroying our cities and murdering our people. That is no blame

to the inventors who have made the modern aircraft possible; it is the blame of the peoples, who have allowed its control to get into the hands of those who use it for the lust of power or for the glory of aggression and suppression. That control is, and must be, exercised through Governments and Statesmen, so that it is a direct Christian duty of each one of us to work in the sphere of politics, to see that we obtain Governments that will base their policies on Christian ideals. But before we can do that effectively we must be Christians ourselves. We must order our own lives according to the teachings of Christ, and we must continually refresh ourselves by His inspiration and guidance.

Most of us are, in fact, day by day actuated by the negative forces of fear and hatred in much that we do. In our relationships with our families and friends, many of us fall far short of the true principles of Brotherhood. If we do not, in our own lives, live the Christian faith, we cannot expect to influence our nation as a whole to apply Christian principles to its Government.

So the beginning of that transition that is so vital for our future is a change in our own outlook, a self-discipline in our own living. That will give us not only the right but the power to influence others, and so influence the whole body of our nation.

## CHAPTER X

### *A Creed for the Times*

ALTHOUGH we have not yet completed the destruction of those evil forces and ideas for which we have sacrificed so much already, there is now an atmosphere of growing confidence in the final and complete triumph of what we regard as the right. Yet in these modern days of wide discussion of political and religious topics, often in the popular press and in the arresting form of headlines and over-simplified articles, we are apt to lose a good deal of the true sense of the words that we employ. Terms like "Brotherhood," "Christianity" and "democracy" become cliches of the vaguest connotation, which everyone interprets according to his or her own views and desires. The words, therefore, become discounted in their significance, and it is difficult to use them in a manner which can reveal their true content. Not only is there this difficulty of expression, but we become so accustomed to hear of the ideas themselves, that they cease to have any real impact upon our sensibilities.

For nearly 2,000 years now, Christianity in a multitude of forms has been woven into the pattern of the life of the world. The simplicity of that pattern in its earlier forms has been lost, and it has become progressively more complex as the theologians and religious leaders of all nations and races have used the circumstances of their

own national and political environment to interpret and elaborate the Christian ethic and religion.

Familiarity with these diverse forms and with the disputes, quarrels, and even wars, that have arisen from these competitive interpretations of Christianity, has tended to weaken and confuse its impact upon the material life of man. Different variants of the Christian religion have spread widely over the world, but the original revolutionary conception which lay behind that religion has tended to become less and less obvious. Christianity has now become, for millions of people in the world, nothing more than an ordinary and accepted incident of society, easily adaptable to any political or social condition in the world. The wide circulation of Christianity throughout the continents, together with the general acceptance accorded to it as a safe and stabilising force, has resulted in a devaluation which has deprived the Christian religion of most of its dynamism.

We can almost say the same of democracy. Though the establishment of democratic forms and governments is in Europe far more modern than the origins of Christianity, yet we have already become so inured to the idea of democracy that we are no longer conscious of its true implications. A century ago, men and women like ourselves, our own grandfathers and great-grandfathers, were prepared to devote and even to lose their lives in the struggle for a democracy which was to them one of the most real and important things in life. It was to many of them as much a mission as was their religion. Indeed, the two were closely linked together, so that many prominent churchmen and non-conformists entered the

ranks of radicalism through their religion. The political protest of radicalism was forced upon them when they sought to apply their religious beliefs to the social problems of their times.

But since those days, there has been an almost worldwide conversion to the respectability of democracy. Just as at one time it was considered hardly respectable not to be a Christian, so it became almost impossible for any but the most ignorant and antiquated to deny the ideal of democratic government. The world had to be made safe for democracy, which was the avowed aim of almost every statesman and politician.

But during this century we have entered upon a new phase of social, religious and political thought, arising out of the very amazing scientific and technical advances that man has achieved in his efforts to win higher standards from nature. Material forces and resources have increased their influence and importance. Man has seemed to become more a master of his own fate. What was once interpreted as divine interference is now analysed in its true relationship to natural forces as a result of human acts. Thus, two results have followed: first, that men have come to concentrate more on the scientific ordering of their own lives and efforts—instead of praying for rain, they try to discover methods of agriculture to diminish the evil effects of drought; and second, there is felt to be a greater need to plan and order the processes of production, so that the old liberal theory that democratic government should not impinge upon the unlimited freedom of the individual to rule his own economic life as best he can, has been largely abandoned, and, with

the discarding of this idea, there has come a tendency to put aside with it the forms of government—the democratic forms—which were built upon the basis of nineteenth century liberal ideology. To-day, we find the Axis powers as the protagonists both of a materialist conception of society and of an abandonment of all democratic forms. These are two of those evil conceptions of civilisation against which we are fighting.

What, then, is it that lies at the foundation of our Christian and democratic beliefs? And are these in reality but two aspects of the same fundamental attitude to life, or are they in fact essentially different?

In answering these questions, I must deal with that aspect of Christianity which affects our social rather than our individual life, and that side of democracy which relates to fundamental principles rather than forms of representation or of government.

At the foundation of our Christian belief lies the fact—which is in reality an act of faith—that Christ's mission to the world was to show the people of the world the divine conception of the human way of life. What He taught and demonstrated by His own life was not a set of rules or laws—as had been the Mosaic and Levitic laws—but an attitude to life and to our fellow men and women. He put down a criterion or a “touchstone,” by which we could judge and regulate our actions in those infinitely variable circumstances of human relationship which constitute life.

The essence of that attitude which He taught and demonstrated was love, or brotherhood based upon the full and equal evaluation of the personality of others,

in the same measure as we would wish those others to take full account of our own personality. Christianity therefore, as a religion, provides a moral and ethical background against which we can test our day-to-day actions. The first test in all those actions, whether they are religious, political, social or economic, must be: Are we regarding those whom our actions will affect as human beings, made in the image of God, and as much entitled to consideration, to happiness, to good standards of life as are we ourselves or our children? And this test, quite irrespective of colour, class or creed, flows from our belief in the common humanity of man inspired by the universal divinity of God.

Now what of the fundamental principles of democracy? The Greek origin of the idea is enshrined in the meaning of the word: the ruling power of the people, not as individuals nor even as a casual collection of individuals, but as an organised body of citizens with common objects and common loyalties. But there is something in it beyond this. The Demos must have a single voice and not a thousand and one discordant voices, since action can only be ordered in a single direction at any given time. The value and the force of that single voice must depend upon its correctly summarising the freely expressed opinion of the majority of the citizens. Freedom of expression of opinion, and the equality of right in the giving and collecting of that opinion, are therefore fundamental to the democratic way of life.

In other words, the "attitude" of democracy is to give full value and opportunity to each individual in the society of democrats. It emphasises the value and impor-

tance of the human personality. What form democracy takes, or what its decisions are in terms of action at any given time, may vary infinitely with the economic and political circumstances of time and place; but whatever its form and whatever its actions, they must be based upon this fundamental attitude towards the human beings who constitute society, an attitude which is not only consistent with but is the same as that of Christianity. One might indeed say that democracy is the practical application of the Christian teaching to the governance of society.

Is there then anything very remarkable about these ideas, about this way of life, which is both Christian and democratic? Surely some will say, "We have long lived in a Christian and democratic society in our own country, and, while we acknowledge that there are other countries which need a change of heart, yet our own country is solidly established in the right lines." But are they right?

A touchstone or test is of no use to us unless it is applied to the measurement of everyday values. The yard measure, the standard yard, which is walled up to preserve its extreme accuracy, is of no use to the draper, or to the builder. It has to be reproduced in tens of thousands of useful forms, so that it could be applied to the everyday acts of life. So it is of no use to say we have democracy, or we have Christianity, unless we use the Christian and democratic measure in all our actions which concern not only ourselves but every human unit of our society.

I have said that both Christianity and democracy were,

in fact, revolutionary in earlier times. They certainly seem to have lost that revolutionary character to-day. Is that because they have reached all their objectives, or is it rather due to a continual series of strategic withdrawals in face of the strong enemy pressure which has sapped their strength and given them a defensive rather than an offensive outlook? One thing is quite clear: many of the objectives have not been reached. There have, undoubtedly, been some remarkable advances; during the last hundred years there have been great improvements in our social and economic life in the right direction; but we are still a very long way from applying broadly that fundamental attitude in our human relationships which is dictated to us by our Christian and democratic beliefs.

In this respect, the present moment in history is one of peculiar importance. The terrifying forces of a world upheaval are compelling us to think out our position anew. This war is revolutionary, as indeed are all worldwide wars, in the sense that the tensions and frictions between the competing ideas and desires had reached such a point that they could no longer be resolved except through the use of the most brutal violence. The eruption of force has come, but what is to follow?

Though it is impossible to simplify the issues of the war—always complex in the extreme and composed of a number of different elements affecting the various sections and classes of the different nations—yet we can, at least, affirm that one not inconsiderable issue for a great number of people is that between totalitarian Nazism, with its fear and hatred of free religious thought and

practice, and democracy, with its insistence upon freedom of personal expression in the political, social, religious and economic spheres, backed by the Christian ideology.

These latter are fine sentiments, the value of which it is easy to see in the sharp contrast with their opposites in other parts of Europe, and we believe in them most sincerely; but unless they are implemented in practice, they will not redound to the good of Christianity and democracy, but be to their great detriment.

Continual professions without performance are the most damaging form of advocacy. It drives the people away in bitter disillusionment, and leaves a vacuum of purpose in their mind which can then easily be filled by totalitarian materialism, paganism, or any other evil idea.

Bernard Shaw once said, in his cynical way, that the Devil gave man a mild injection of Christianity to immunise him against a more violent attack.

Perhaps we could apply that same stricture to our attitude to democracy.

What we require to-day is a strong leaven of men and women whom the Devil has failed to immunise and who will catch the same sort of violent infection of Christianity and democracy that struck some of our forebears. We need the self-sacrificing passion of the missionary in our own country.

If this need is doubted, look around you. And look first at the state of our country to-day, in the closing era of the greatest world war. There is no unemployment, little or no poverty, standards of living and of nutrition are higher than ever before the war, because the people

can afford proper nourishment. On the other hand, there are the blitzed cities, the ever growing casualty lists of men, women and children, and above all, of the flower of our youth, who should have been the guardians of our future and of the future of the world.

What a mad and tragic world, in which war has brought prosperity to millions while others die, starve, and are tortured to their graves! For such a state of affairs we can and would take no credit. Yet how is it that in and for war all things are possible, while in and for peace we are prepared to do so much less? The answer is that, while we get carried away to the point of sacrificing all self-interest in the cause of our common humanity and faith in times of acute danger, such as war, with all its romance of death and sacrifice, we do not rise to the same heights in times of peace. The circumstances of war are more compelling than are our Christian or democratic ideals. The slow, hard struggle in the political and economic sphere for justice and equality has not the same romantic appeal to us as the sharp and agonising conflict of war. Yet our whole Christian outlook should drive us to make our maximum self-sacrifice and our greatest effort in times of peace, for thus alone can we avert the evils of war.

A sound, happy, moral civilisation cannot be built up on a basis of evil material surroundings. Poverty, disease, ignorance and slumdom are not only inconsistent with our conviction that there is a divine spark in every man, but they are the certain forerunners of bitterness, strife and war. It is of no use to either our personal or our social salvation merely to profess our Christianity and our democracy. We must employ them ruthlessly to cre-

ate a physical human environment of justice and of decency, in which they themselves will be able to survive, and become powerful factors for controlling the future of the world.

As Christian democrats, we should form an active army fighting injustice and poverty, unemployment and inequality, with as much vigour as we now show in our fight against those same evils in the garb of aggressive Nazism. And in that struggle—and here lies, in my belief, the crux of the situation—we must be prepared to sacrifice all, even life itself, but certainly our personal wealth or privilege, for the sake of the principles in which we believe.

To-day, millions of people in the world are suffering, many of them death itself, because of their stubborn faith. Should we be prepared to undergo such trials for our Christian and democratic faith, or should we deny them before the cock crows thrice?

These may seem exaggerated terms in which to test our sincerity, but without such a deep conviction we shall be deluding ourselves and others with empty phrases, if we base the future upon the need for Christianity and democracy.

Neither Christianity nor democracy encourages us to use violence ourselves; in fact, they both equally impose upon us obedience to the will of the majority, and self-discipline. But we must not give way to violence or threats of violence in others, any more than we have given way to Hitler's threats or the Nazi violence. And above all, we must not yield to our own interests, preferences or convenience, where they clash with what is clearly our duty to the brotherhood of man.

Perhaps one of the difficulties in our struggle to establish Christian and democratic principles in times of peace is the lack of violence and the unromantic terms in which it may present itself. If we could ride out, with all the romantic glamour of the Knight Errant of the Crusader, to conquer the dragon of evil or the unbeliever, it might be easier to stir up our own courage and determination. But when the struggle is carried on in terms of meetings and demonstrations, of pamphleteering and ballot boxes, it is far more difficult to inspire oneself or the people. Yet the evils are there, and only by our concerted action will they be removed. They will not of themselves wither away, nor, if we get rid of them, will they be followed automatically by better and more just conditions.

I should like to hear a new and more practical creed spoken from the heart of every Christian in the world—in terms somewhat like these:—

I believe in the brotherhood of all men, whatever their race, colour, creed or class, as taught by the divine life of Christ, and I pledge myself, without thought of my own interests, to work unceasingly to establish by my daily actions that measure of justice and equality in my own country and throughout the world which can alone form the basis for a happy Christian community of life amongst all the peoples.

I will never give in to the powers of evil or to injustice and inequity, however much I may suffer personally by my resistance. I will fight on ever, here as there, because I believe that thus alone can Christ's Kingdom be established here on earth.

## CHAPTER XI

### *"God Is My Co-Pilot"*

I ONCE WAS SO UNWISE as to take part in a Brains' Trust in the North of England—it had been organised in aid of the Merchant Seamen Fund and was therefore something to be encouraged—but I hadn't fully realised what an ordeal it would be.

Five of us sat on the stage of a theatre with the Question Master and had to give immediate answers to the most searching and difficult questions. There was no warning whatever, and the questions jumped from subject to subject in a most unwarranted and unexplained fashion.

But the reason why I recall this incident is because of one of the questions. I do not recall the precise words of the question, but it was somewhat in this form: "A pilot of the Bomber Command has recently written a book entitled 'God Is My Co-Pilot.' Do you consider this a proper title for a book?"

The implication behind the question was quite clear—that it was blasphemous to associate God with the work of a bomber pilot and crew. I have not read the book, but that doesn't really matter, since the question is a broad one and is certainly a very pertinent one.

It raises, moreover, a very profound and difficult matter.

It might, perhaps, have been put in quite another way, which would have brought out the questioner's point, "Do you believe in Jehovah of the Old Testament as a different conception of God to that given by Christ in His teaching in the New Testament?"

There is, of course, a very profound difference between the two conceptions, and yet the whole teaching of the New Testament is keyed into the Old Testament teaching by Christ Himself. Jehovah was essentially a national, a Jewish God; the Jews were His chosen people, and their prowess in the world was His particular care. He helped them to win their battles and to defeat their enemies. He caused the waters to be parted so that they could escape the Egyptians in their flight, and He caused the waters to come together again to destroy their pursuers. He again it was who caused the sun to stand still while they completed the destruction of their enemy. Indeed, He was pictured as carrying on His own war against the false gods—such as Baal—through the agency of His own people.

But there was something more than this in the Jewish religion. The most significant factor of all, was that their religion was the very foundation of their whole life. The fact that they considered themselves as the chosen race, and as the agents for Jehovah in his battle against the rival gods, made them consider their life and their religion as two inseparable aspects of the same thing. Life was religion and religion was life.

Christ was himself a Jew, and He regarded His teaching as growing out of the teaching of the Jewish faith. It was a new or fresh stage in the same relationship of

man to God. The coming of the Messiah had been foretold by the Jewish prophets, and Christ announced himself as the Messiah who had been prophesied as coming to complete, rather than to destroy, the Jewish religion. He was—as it were—a great reformer of that religion.

According to His teaching, the Jewish religion had been pervaded in many ways by the doctrinal theology of the scribes and Pharisees, against whom He is constantly railing. They had forgotten the substance, the spirit of their religion, in devoting themselves to the forms and dogmas which they had, more and more, interpreted for their own benefit and to give themselves more power and authority. That is why He called them “whited sepulchres,” pure and correct on the surface—in their formal observances—but rotten at heart. He did not condemn the Jewish religion, He constantly cited passages from the Jewish prophets with approval, but He did very vigorously protest against the perversion of that religion. He came to destroy all that was wrong and bad in it, to purify it and at the same time to extend its scope and appeal. His was a divine re-interpretation of the basic religion. We may, perhaps, express it in this way—He did not deny the Old Testament in its fundamental teachings, He proclaimed himself as the Son of the God of the Old Testament, but He gave those teachings and that God a new meaning. He accepted the history of the past, but declared that the teachings had become narrow and decadent, and announced that He had come to cleanse and purify and extend the benefits far beyond the confines of Jewry to all the peoples of the world.

The "eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" doctrine, which had been associated with the narrow nationalism of the Jewish religion in the Mosaic law, He denied in the light of the wider concept of the brotherhood of all men which He preached. It was His task to convert this nationalist religion into an international religion, and all that was associated in that religion—wrongly, by His teaching—with the nationalist outlook of the Jews, He put aside. His attitude to the Samaritans, who were regarded by the Jews as outside the family of God on earth, showed that He would have none of such distinction of races or creeds—that men and women should be judged by their acts and not by their nationality. Similarly, He inveighed against the sectional divisions which had grown up between the Levites, the Scribes, and the Pharisees; and the ordinary people—the publicans and sinners—these too were inconsistent with the message of universal love and brotherhood which He brought.

The basic teachings of the Old Testament were applicable to all men, and the attempt to narrow them down to a certain race or to certain sections of that chosen race, were merely limitations imposed by human beings upon a divine truth.

We must, therefore, recognise that there are then great and deep differences between the application of the fundamental religious truths as expressed in parts of the Old Testament and as expressed in the New Testament.

But the one constant theme that runs through both Old and New Testaments, is the relationship of God to man. The one God is the same in both, but in the Old

Testament, God's desires are interpreted by a series of prophets, not all taking the same view in some matters; whereas, in the New Testament, God expresses His own meaning directly through the Gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Just as the original Jewish faith had become overlaid in the course of centuries by man-made forms and dogmas, so the same process has tended to go on in the Christian religion during the last 2,000 years. Just as Christ took the Jews back to the fundamentals of the Old Testament faith, so now we must go back to the fundamentals of the New Testament.

But, in doing so, we must not overlook the fact that the New Testament is linked up with the Old, not with the nationalistic conception of Jehovah which the Jews had developed, but with Christ's interpretation of the Universal God.

The most important part of the Old Testament teaching which was carried forward, was that which concerned the relationship of God to man. This was a personal relationship with a God who was interested and concerned in every day-to-day action of all his servants here on earth. It was quite different to the idea of the Greek gods—half gods and half devils—who concerned themselves mainly with their own affairs in heaven and took little notice of men on earth, except to hurl an occasional thunderbolt at them.

The Jewish God was always present in the inner sanctuary of the Temple and with the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and was to be consulted on all the major problems arising in the day-to-day life of the commu-

nity. Nothing demonstrates more clearly the continuity of this personal relationship than the words of the Lord's Prayer.

Gradually there has tended to grow up in the Christian churches a different conception of God. He is thought of as being more concerned with an ideal heavenly life, and less concerned with the daily happenings on earth. Christianity has thus sometimes been converted into nothing but a religion of personal salvation, rather than a way of life here on earth. It does, of course, embrace both of these aspects, but its foundation in the Jewish religion of the Old Testament shows that the personal association of God with our daily doings, not only as individuals but as a society, is an important and vital factor.

Just as the whole Jewish race was the chosen instrument of the God of the Old Testament, so the whole Christian Church is the living embodiment of God's purpose here on earth. We are not only individual Christians with individual personal relations with God, but we are part of a society that equally has that personal relationship with, and responsibility to, God. The idea that there are two worlds, the one in which we live, imperfect and necessarily sinful, and the one hereafter, perfect and without blemish, has grown up since the time of Christ, and has led many people to dissociate their religion from their daily life. We are liable to regard Sunday as the day set apart for contemplation of the perfect life hereafter, and the other six days as devoted to the life of this world. Religion and life thus become separated in a way which was unthinkable to the followers of the Old Testament teachings, and which is also quite con-

trary to the teachings of the New Testament. "I come to bring you life and life more abundantly," was Christ's way of putting it. He did not suggest that He came merely to tell us about the life hereafter—that was part of His teaching, but only a part. He was concerned, and very much concerned, with the human relationships in this life; He it was who introduced the analogy of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Let me now come back, after these introductory remarks, to the question that was put to the Brains Trust: Is it right to think and talk of God as "my co-pilot"?

Surely the answer must be "Yes." God is to be regarded as our co-worker in everything that we do; that is the true relationship that is contemplated in the teaching of Christ. "Behold, I am always with you." He never suggested that He was only with us when we were doing the right things and not when we were doing the wrong ones. He is there with us to give us strength to do what is right, in the highest moments of our achievement; in the greatest moments of our danger He is always with us. We have not got to wait for His presence until we pass on into another life.

The fact that He is our co-worker is a difficult one to realise, but, if we can realise it, then it must have more influence upon our thoughts and actions than anything else in our lives.

Since Christ's revelations—which have for us divine authority—we know that God is not the Nationalist God of Battle pictured in some places in the Old Testament, but the Father of all men, whatever their race, colour, or creed.

The fact that He is always with us does not prove

that He always approves our actions. We may refuse to listen to His advice, for it is an essential part of His purpose that we should have the free will to do as we think best, even though it is wrong.

To say, therefore, that He is the co-pilot of a bomber is not to suggest that He approves of bombing; it is only to express the essential Christian belief that God is omnipresent and is profoundly concerned with our every thought and action. But we can hide nothing from Him, even though we may be able to hide things from our fellow human beings.

It is because so many of us forget these facts—the facts of our faith—that we get muddled and confused about many things we have to decide or do.

In our ordinary social, political, or economic life, we arrive at judgments and decisions upon purely materialistic considerations, as if that part of our life did not concern God or our religion. Indeed, sometimes we go so far as to assert that these day-to-day matters are no concern of our religion.

In the result, we can see what an awful mess we have got into, in the world. We should—if we hold the Christian faith—take advantage of the omnipresence of God to consult with Him as to how we should act. He has, through the teachings of Christ, given us a general code of behaviour, a sort of touchstone by which we can judge our actions; but over and above that, we can commune with Him in prayer when we find it difficult to decide on particular issues.

The important thing is for us to remember that our religion is a part of our everyday life—that however we

act we cannot escape that intimate relationship with God in all that we do.

If the great body of professing Christians in the world were to bring their religious judgment to bear upon the practical issues of life, the world and our own country would go along far more smoothly and happily.

Selfish interest would not be the determining factors of policies, nor would the search for power deprive individuals of their power to decide issues justly, and so inflict injustice and hardship on others.

When we examine the problems of civilization from the opposite point of view, from the material point of view, we find that there is an uncertainty of purpose and a vagueness of direction which deprives us of the power to progress without falling into disastrous wars and revolutions.

This is because we have no firm foundation upon which to build our policies. The material interests of different races, classes and individuals are, and must be, antagonistic; they develop selfishness and so breed antagonism. The common factor, and the only common factor, which is available as the foundation upon which to build our actions—as individuals, classes, or nations—is our common Christian faith, our moral rather than our material interests. That does provide us with a set of broad rules to start with, which we can interpret into our social and political actions. It gives us purpose and inspiration, it defies failure because it persists beyond failure, and it is—if we truly believe in it—something much more than the best advice of the expert: it is the word of God.

When it comes to the vastly difficult problem of the treatment of the evildoer, whether individual, nation, or class—then we must do our best to interpret the teachings of the New Testament as we see them to be applicable to any particular set of circumstances.

We know that human judgments on this problem differ widely from the extreme pacifist who believes that any form of violence is against the will of God, to the other extreme of those who believe that they are the appointed agents of His vengeance, much as the chosen race believed in the times of the Old Testament.

No living human being can lay down in absolute terms what is right and wrong in this matter. God alone is the judge, and we can only hope to act rightly if we do our utmost to apply His teachings and to seek His help in prayer and communion with Him. Our own human imperfections make it certain that our individual judgments will not always be right; the fact that equally sincere Christians arrive at such widely different interpretations of God's will proves the difficulty. But none of these things take away from the necessity to frame our judgments in war, as in peace, upon the basis of what we most truly and honestly believe to be God's will.

However many mistakes we or others may make, this is absolutely certain, that the more we strive to bring His teachings and His advice into our daily lives, the happier we shall make ourselves and all those with whom we come into contact. We shall be at peace with our own conscience—which is the first rule of a happy life.

Our Christian religion is either nothing at all—less than nothing, indeed—a stupid mystical self-deception which

we use as a sort of vague insurance against possible suffering in the future, or else it is the most real thing in the whole world and throughout every phase of our life. There is no half-way house. It is everything or nothing. That is the decision we all of us have to take; the bomber pilot who wrote "God Is My Co-Pilot" must have taken that decision and taken it rightly. If we can follow his example and treat God as our co-worker in all things, ever present to help us to do what is right, we shall be able to change our civilisation to the enormous benefit of our fellow-men. That is the challenge of Christianity—if to-day that challenge appears feeble, the fault is ours, who profess ourselves Christians. It is we who have failed and not Christ. He gives us the power and also the free-will to follow Him or to desert our faith. His call is ever present. The greater our difficulties and the more our complexities, the deeper is our need to follow that call. "Be strong and of good courage, quit ye like men."

THE END

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